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AUSTRALIAN
COLONIES.

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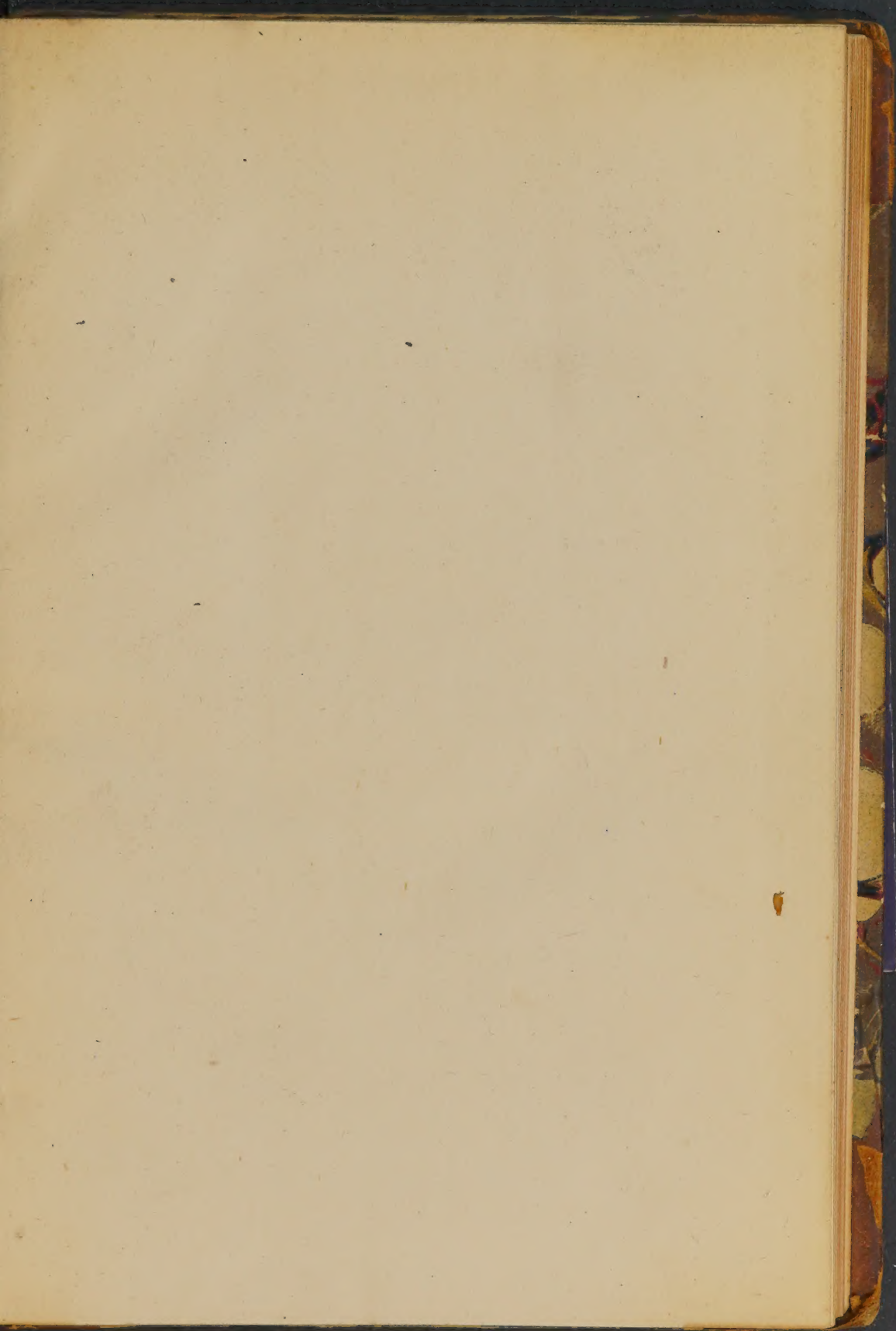
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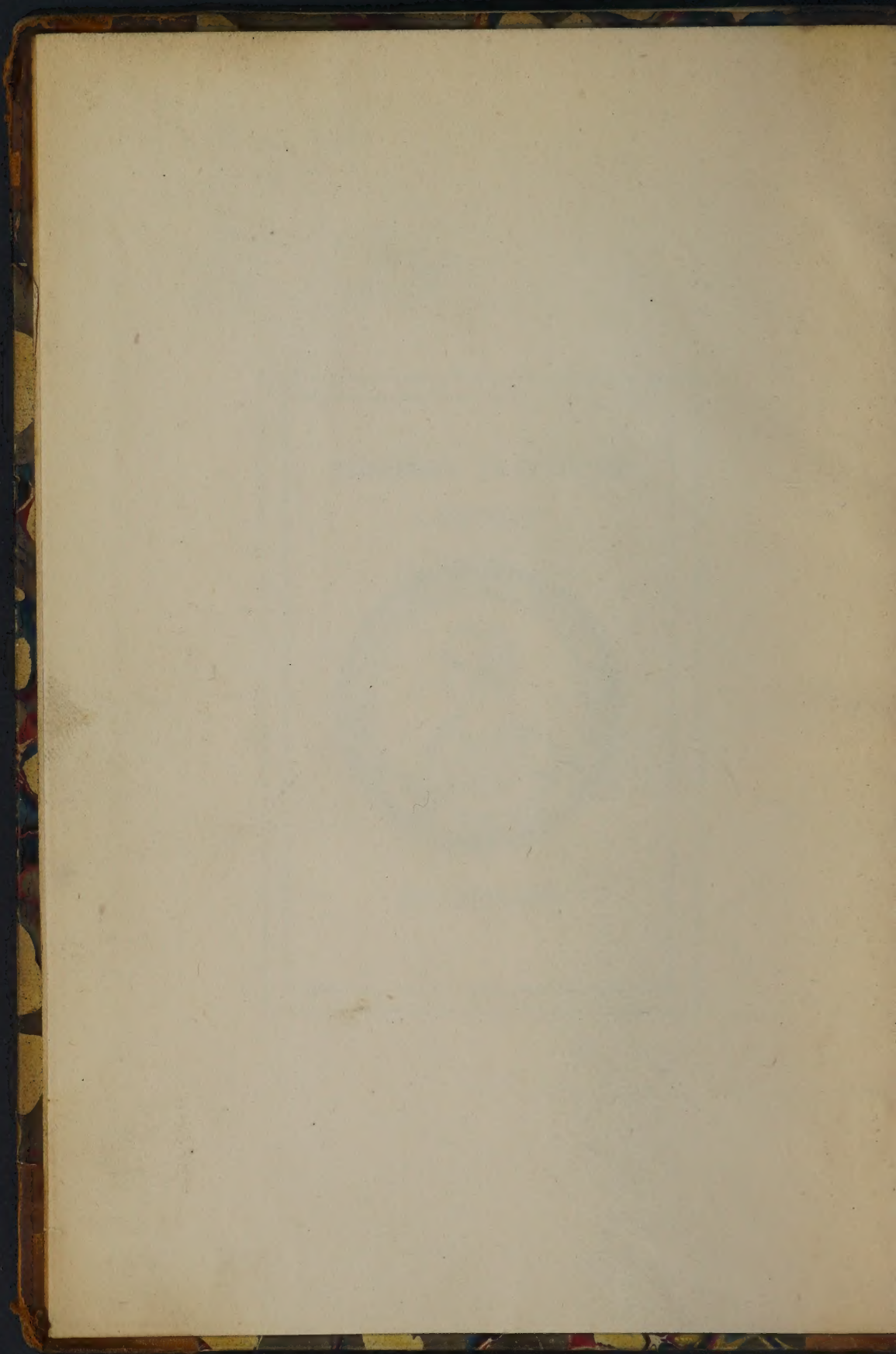
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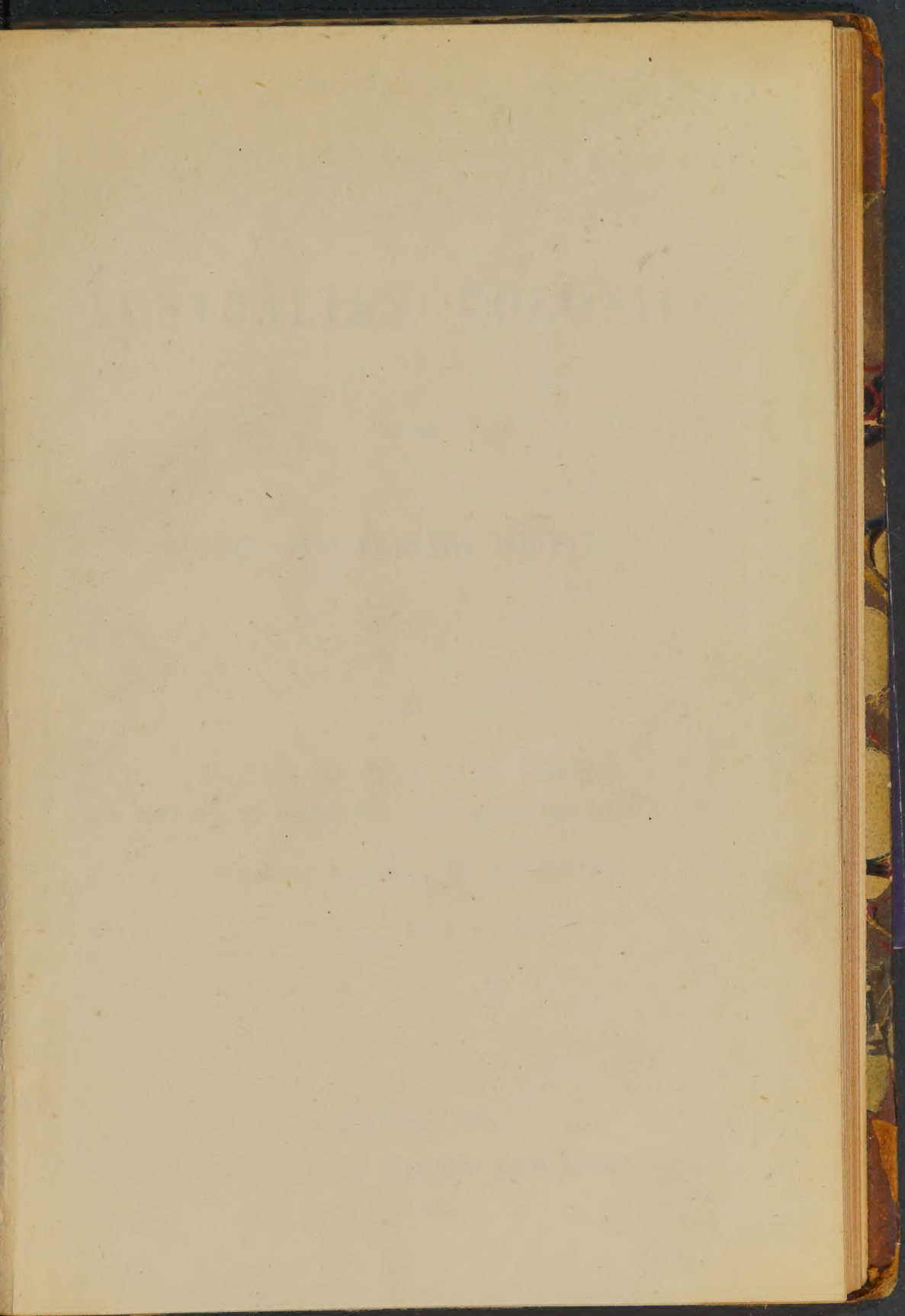
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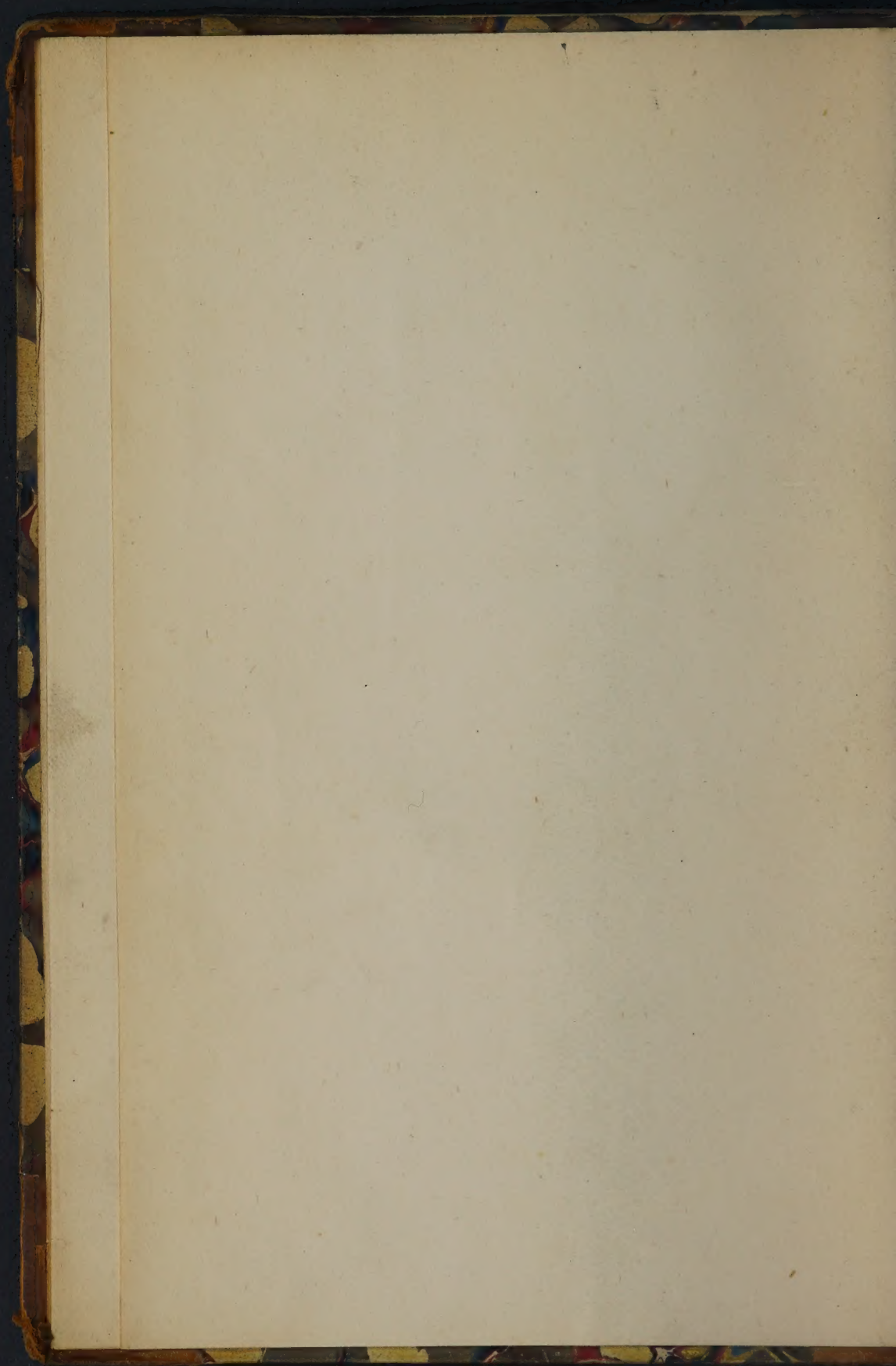


BALTIMORE









THE
AUSTRALIAN COLONIES:

THEIR
ORIGIN AND PRESENT CONDITION.

BY
WILLIAM HUGHES, F.R.G.S.
"LATE PROFESSOR OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE COLLEGE FOR CIVIL ENGINEERS
AUTHOR OF
"A MANUAL OF GEOGRAPHY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages require little in the way of prefatory remark. Had the interest attaching to Australia at the present time been limited to the golden deposits which have attracted so recent and startling a notice, the Author would have felt that the objects of inquiry were already amply served by the numerous accounts that have been placed before the public, through the medium of the periodical press as well as by other means. But it appeared to him that the curiosity so generally awakened in regard to our southern colonies afforded legitimate occasion for the attempt to supply, in a popular (and, it is hoped, not unattractive) form, an account not only of the objects of more immediate interest from their connection with the passing events of the day, but also of the climate, productions, and general resources of the Australian settlements, and of their various advantages as a field of emigration;—of their extensive capabilities, in fact, for the profitable employment of British labour,

capital, and skill. In the endeavour to do this he has availed himself of the most authentic sources of information (including the latest intelligence from the scenes of the gold-diggers' labours), and is conscious of no other desire than that of giving a fair and impartial account of countries which appear likely to exercise no unimportant share of influence over the destinies of the present and future generations of the human race.

Islington, October 20th, 1852.

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A U S T R A L I A.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

AUSTRALIA—the quarter of the globe to which so many thousands of our fellow-countrymen are at the present moment bending their course, and upon which the eyes of the civilised world are fixed—is a name of extensive significance. Within its wide limits are comprehended regions of the most various features, and of a total extent which nearly equals that of all Europe;—countries, some of which share the intensely heated atmosphere of the torrid zone, and others which enjoy a temperature resembling that of the lands by which the blue waters of the Mediterranean are skirted; mountain-chains which more than double the altitude of our loftiest English summits, and plains which rival in their immensity and monotonous uniformity the steppes of Russia, or the prairies of the New World;—tracts which, in fertility of soil, may be compared with the most favoured regions of the Asiatic or the American continents, and others which are parched and sterile as the African Sahara. It is a land of contrasts

and novelties, and, if measured by the personal experiences which are acquired on the northern side of our planet, of contradictions manifold and extraordinary. "It is New Holland (says an accurate and acute observer*) where it is summer with us when it is winter in Europe, and *vice versa*; where the barometer rises before bad weather, and falls before good; where the north is the hot wind, and the south the cold; where the humblest house is fitted up with cedar; where the fields are fenced with mahogany, and myrtle trees are burnt for fuel; where the swans are black, and the eagles are white; where the kangaroo, an animal between the squirrel and the deer, has five claws on its fore-paws, and three talons on its hind legs, like a bird, and yet hops on its tail; where the mole lays eggs, and has a duck's bill; where there is a bird with a broom in its mouth instead of a tongue; where the pears are made of wood, with the stalk at the broader end; and where the cherry grows with the stone on the outside." Truly a strange land, where pigs are fattened on peaches, and hundreds of thousands of fat sheep and oxen are annually boiled down for the sake of their tallow—to the waste of untold quantities of excellent mutton and beef!

Nor do the phenomena of social life which Australia exhibits differ less widely from those of other lands, than its external features or its natural productions. Civilised and savage life there stand side by side; amidst the highest evidences of social refinement and luxury, even amidst the crowded streets of the populous and busy city, is seen the scarcely half-clothed form of the native Australian—the "black fellow," who was at no distant period

* Mr. Barron Field.

the sole inhabitant of the great southern land, and who (like the Indian of the New World) is gradually passing away before the advancing footsteps of his white brethren. And, amongst the European population of these colonies, the successful pursuits of industry and the acquirement of wealth have, in numerous cases, reversed the social ordinances of our own country. Those who *here* toilingly occupied the lowest steps on the ladder of life have *there* often reached high towards its summit; and many whom the laws of England condemned to expulsion from her shores have *there*, amidst novel influences and surrounded by fresh associations, risen from a condition of moral degradation into one of social respectability, and even importance. In fine, with the transit from our own island, situate on the northern half of the globe, to the lands which lie amidst the waters of the Southern Ocean, we pass into a totally new region; and, with much which amongst the rapidly increasing population of the Australian colonies forcibly reminds the wanderer of his distant and sea-girt home, he yet finds everywhere around him the novel scenes, and the unfamiliar aspects, of the antipodes.

But, after all, perhaps the most instructive and noteworthy circumstance connected with Australia is the fact of its colonisation, and the amazing rapidity with which its population and resources have increased within a brief period. The whole history of the Australian colonies is almost, as it were, but an affair of yesterday. During the period of active life enjoyed by the fathers of the present generation, and even within the memory of many who are yet among us, and in the full possession of their active

faculties, the shores of Australia were only known to the white man by the casual and unfrequent visits of the passing navigator; and where *now* are congregated thousands and tens of thousands of the Anglo-Saxon race,—with all the busy hopes and fears, the energies and the excitements, by which its members are everywhere characterised—there were *then* only a pathless wild, scarcely tenanted by a few hundreds of naked savages, forests which had never been explored by the foot of man, birds and wild animals whose solitude had never been disturbed by the sound of the human voice.

It is scarcely more than “sixty years since” (to borrow an expression of our illustrious novelist) that the first fleet of British colonists landed on the shores of the great southern continent: it is scarcely more than “sixty years since” that the foundations of Sydney were first laid, and where now stands the populous city, with its 60,000 inhabitants, and the hum of busy life sounding through its crowded streets, was a tenantless waste: it is within a third part of “sixty years since” that the name of New South Wales has become dissociated from ideas of crime and suffering, and allied with some of the fairest hopes and brightest prospects which belong to the history of the human race: and it is within a still smaller proportion of that period (almost within the compass of the passing events of the present day) that the flourishing colonies of South Australia and Port Phillip have sprung into existence, and are already exhibiting the full vigour of mature strength and power. And Australia already contains a British population which is little short of half a million, and which, aided by the extensive immigration in present

progress, is increasing in a more rapid ratio than that of any country in the old world, and with a speed which bids fair to rival that of the States comprised within the North American Union.

Facts truly marvellous are these, and worthy of the deepest consideration! They stand unrivalled in the records of time. The history of antiquity has nothing to offer in comparison; for what are the colonisings of the olden nations, conducted as they were by the adjacent shores and island-groups of the land-encircled Mediterranean, compared to the planting of settlements at a distance from the parent country which is measured by half the circumference of the globe? And even the length of voyage across the Atlantic, which required to be measured in the formation of the colonies of the New World,—even this becomes insignificant compared with the proportions of a transit from the northern to the southern side of our planet, and which was (until a recent period) estimated by months instead of weeks in its accomplishment.

The recent, and almost startling, discoveries of *gold* in the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria,—of gold in such extraordinary abundance as almost to realise the fabled narratives of Oriental imagination, and to convert the dreams of poetry and romance into the experiences of everyday life,—have added their crowning splendour to the attractions of Australia as a field of employment for the over-abundant population of our islands. But of those who contemplate the voyage thither, or who are (from various causes) interested in the success of Australian emigrants, it may unhesitatingly be affirmed that a large

proportion, perhaps the great majority, are in almost entire ignorance of the characteristic points of difference between this distant region and their own native country, —are unaware, in short, of those peculiarities which distinguish the climate and productions of Australia, —of the history, condition, and general pursuits of its present inhabitants, and, in a still greater degree, of the vast and diversified capabilities which it possesses for the advantageous employment of British labour, British enterprise, and British capital. It is to a brief exposition of these points that we propose devoting the following pages, and that we courteously invite the attention of our readers.

CHAP. II.

First Discovery of Australia. — Voyages of the Spaniards — the Dutch — the English. — Torres. — Tasman. — Cook. — Establishment of the Colony of New South Wales.

AT the commencement of the seventeenth century, the vast ocean which stretches between the shores of Asia and the southern polar circle was almost unknown to navigators, and the wide space lying beyond the immediate limits of the Indian Archipelago presented a blank on the map of the world. The brilliant discoveries of Columbus and his successors had enlarged the boundaries of knowledge by the addition of an entire hemisphere, and fixed the relative positions of the great continents which constitute the Eastern and the Western Worlds. The

Spaniards, in their career of discovery and conquest from the eastward, had traversed the immense expanse of water which divides America from the eastern shores of the Asiatic continent; while the Portuguese, advancing from the opposite direction, had become familiar with the passage round the "Stormy Cape,"* and the navigation of the Indian seas. Amidst the rich and beautiful islands of the Indian Archipelago these two nations encountered one another in the career of adventure, and disputed the sovereignty over the newly reached regions of the farthest east.

When the pilots and cosmographers of the sixteenth century came to mark out on their charts—with such definiteness as they were then enabled to achieve—the great maritime discoveries of their age, they could not fail to be struck with the immense preponderance of land upon the northern side of the globe. Regarding this fact in connection with the large area of the southern hemisphere which was as yet unvisited, they were led to the inference that there must exist somewhere a great Southern Continent, which might be expected to rival in extent the continents of the east and the west. There thus grew up, during the period to which we refer, a general belief in the existence of unknown lands, of vast extent, to the southward of the equator, and every fresh discovery in those regions was eagerly hailed by the mariner as the fulfilment of this anticipation. Every newly reached island or tract of coast was assumed to constitute a part of the expected "Australia," or Southern Land, in search

* The Cape of Good Hope, called by its discoverer, Bartholemew Diaz (in 1485), "El Cabo Tormentoso," or the Stormy Cape.

of which numerous voyages were successively, and in many cases vainly, undertaken.

In the year 1606, Pedro Fernando de Quiros, a Spanish navigator of skill and experience, was sent from the shores of Peru on a voyage of discovery amongst the islands of the western Pacific. The results of this expedition were in many respects important; and it added more largely to the stock of geographical information than any similar undertaking on the part of the Spaniards since the days of Magellan, who, in 1520, had discovered the well-known strait which bears his name, and had led the way to the first circumnavigation of the globe. De Quiros sailed from Callao, and, after touching at several islands on his way, at length approached the shores of an unknown tract of land, and anchored his vessels in a spacious haven, to which he gave the name of *La Vera Cruz*. With the preconceived notions to which we have referred as characterising the voyagers of his age, he at once concluded the land which he had discovered to be a part of the long-sought southern continent, and accordingly named it "Australia del Espiritu Santo," taking formal possession of it in the name of his sovereign, Philip III. of Spain. He afterwards hastened his return to the western coast of America, whence he proceeded to Spain to give an account of his discovery, and to obtain the means of following it on a scale of magnitude suitable to the occasion.

But the "Australia" which De Quiros had thus found is now believed to have been only one of the islands belonging to the archipelago of the New Hebrides, situated some distance to the north-eastward of the southern con-

continent. On leaving its shores, however, our navigator became separated by a storm from the other vessels of his fleet, and pursued his homeward voyage alone. Luis vas Torres, who was second in command, continuing to advance on a southerly, and afterwards a westerly course, fell in with the shores of New Guinea, and explored some of the numerous archipelagoes in their vicinity. When sailing to the west, in 11° south latitude, he saw land to the southward, having in reality passed through the channel which separates New Guinea from the Australian continent, and on which posterity has justly bestowed the name of its discoverer, this channel being the now well-known Torres Strait of our charts. The land which Torres had seen to the southward must have been a portion of the great *Terra Australis*, or southern continent, of which De Quiros had been in search, and this is perhaps the first authentic record of the Australian shores having been seen by European eyes.

We say "perhaps" only, for there is some reason to think that the Portuguese had become acquainted with the shores of Australia at a much earlier period, during the prior half of the sixteenth century. This supposition derives its chief support from the authority of some ancient maps, which are preserved among the manuscripts in our National Library, and in which a large island, called by the name of "Great Java," is delineated in a position nearly coincident with that of the Australian mainland. But both the Spaniards and Portuguese were in those days often prompted by political jealousy to conceal the extent of their discoveries, and if the shores of Australia had ever been visited by them during the

period referred to, the knowledge thus acquired had passed away, wholly unproductive of any permanent results. Even the discoveries of De Quiros and Torres were subsequently regarded as little more than fictions; and it was not until more than a century and a half had elapsed since the latter had sailed through the strait which now bears his name, that the achievement of the enterprising navigator was finally rescued from oblivion, on occasion of the capture of Manilla by the British, in the year 1762, when copies of the original documents relating to this voyage were for the first time brought to light.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, another nation, the Dutch, had entered on the career of discovery and conquest in the Eastern seas; and during the earlier half of the succeeding century attracted notice by the enlightened spirit and persevering energy with which their undertakings were prosecuted. It is to this nation that the first authentic acquaintance with the Australian coasts must be justly attributed. Torres had only seen the land to the southward of his course, and appears to have passed by without suspecting that it was really the "great southern continent" which had so long been sought. He probably supposed it was but of limited extent, and formed only a portion of the extensive archipelago through which he was sailing. But in the same year (1606) a Dutch vessel, called the *Duyfhen*, sailed along part of the Australian coast (on the eastern side of the great inlet now known as the Gulf of Carpentaria). At the points on which they touched they found the land occupied by wild, cruel, and black savages, who murdered some of their crew, and want of provisions ultimately compelled

their return. The name of Cape *Keer Weer* (or Turn-again), given by them to the headland which marks the furthest limit of their voyage, still commemorates the undertaking. But the voyage of the *Duyfhen*, like the enterprise of Torres, was prosecuted in ignorance of its real nature, the Dutch supposing the land they were coasting to form part of the southern shores of New Guinea, so that their discovery was, for the time, robbed of its greatest interest.

When once, however, the attention of the Dutch had been drawn to these distant coasts, they determined, with characteristic perseverance, on following up their discoveries. Accordingly, in the years intervening between 1616 and 1627 they visited, and actually explored, a very large portion of the Australian shores, embracing nearly all the northern and western, as well as great part of the southern, coast. Among the earliest of these voyagers under the Dutch flag is mentioned Theodoric Hertoge (or Hertog), who, during his passage to the East Indies, in a small vessel called the *Endraght*, fell in with the west coast of Australia in about latitude 25° south, where his memory is preserved in the familiar appellation of *Dirk Hertog*, given to an island and adjacent roadstead lying on the western side of Shark's Bay. To the coasts then seen by him, he gave the name of *Endraght's Land*, from that of his vessel; and in like manner the succeeding Dutch voyagers bestowed appellations, derived either from their own names, or those of their ships, on such parts of the coast as they visited. In this way the names of Arnhem Land, Edel's Land, De Witt's Land, Leeuwin Land, and Nuyt's Land, became attached to different parts of the

coast, and have only been displaced from our maps of Australia within a very recent period.

A more systematic effort was made by the same people a few years later, in the expedition commanded by Tasman, who sailed from Batavia (then, as now, a Dutch settlement), in 1642, on a voyage of discovery to the "great south land." One of the main objects of Tasman's voyage was to ascertain how far the "Terra Australis" extended towards the south, and both in this and other regards it was attended with full success. Between the latitudes of 42° and 43° south, Tasman discovered the land on which he bestowed the name of *Van Diemen*, in honour of the governor of the Dutch East Indian colonies, who was his patron in the expedition. He supposed this to form a portion of the southern continent (a mistake not rectified until the discovery of Bass's Strait, after the further lapse of more than a century and a half), and, passing round its southernmost point, accomplished one great object of his undertaking. Thence continuing his voyage to the eastward, he was the first to discover New Zealand (to which he gave the name of Staten Land), and, passing through the groups of the Friendly Islands, and others situated in that locality, he finally returned to Batavia by the northern side of New Guinea. Tasman had thus accomplished the entire circumnavigation of the Australian continent, though — as it subsequently appeared — without actually visiting any portion of its coasts. In a second voyage, however, in 1644, the same navigator traced the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, as well as a large extent of the Australian coast lying further to the westward.

The important share possessed by the Dutch nation in the records of Australian discovery is evidenced in the appellation of *New Holland*, given (at a period subsequent to Tasman's voyage) to the western part of "Terra Australis" by order of the States-General, and frequently applied—though erroneously—in the present day to the whole of the southern continent.

But the maritime enterprises of the Dutch, though sometimes leading to more solid advantages in the end, wanted the romantic splendour and brilliancy of heroic achievement which impart a charm to the earlier records of Spanish and Portuguese discovery. The voyages above referred to were productive of no immediate result; nor was the aspect of the Australian shores sufficiently inviting to induce others to follow in the tracks of their first explorers. When the Spaniards first reached the shores of the New World, they found the natives adorned with ornaments of gold, and saw the abundant evidence of riches, luxurious enjoyment, and even partial civilisation and refinement. But the coasts of Australia were arid and unattractive in aspect, while the few natives who seemed to possess them were merely naked savages—to all appearance the inhabitants of a country so wanting in resources as scarcely to afford the means of supporting existence, and possessing no inducement to more extensive acquaintance with it on the part of Europeans. Could its golden riches—the brilliant discovery of the present day—have been known to its earlier visitors, what changes in its after-destiny might have ensued! The tide of adventure across the Atlantic might have been partially arrested in its course, and the bold and adventurous spirits of the age would have eagerly

hastened *then* (as, after the lapse of two centuries, they are doing at the present time) to the distant shores of this southern world.

For upwards of a century after the voyages of Tasman, the shores of Australia were seemingly almost forgotten by European nations, and were seldom visited, excepting by the chance adventure of the passing navigator. An exception occurs in the case of our fellow-countryman, the bold and sagacious Dampier, of buccaneering celebrity, who was sent by King William III., in 1699, on an expedition for the discovery of new countries, as well as for the fuller examination of the shores of New Holland and New Guinea. Dampier reached the western coast of New Holland at the same spot where it had been visited by its early discoverer, Dirk Hertog, and gave to the inlet which occurs there the name of Shark's Bay, from the multitude of those rapacious dwellers in the ocean by which he found it infested. He saw, with great astonishment, the kangaroos jumping about on shore, and further to the northward met with some of the natives of the Australian race, whom he described as "the most unpleasant-looking, and worst-featured, of any people" he had ever seen.

No other note-worthy event occurs in the records of Australian discovery until the time of our illustrious countryman, Captain Cook, the first of whose celebrated voyages was undertaken in 1768. In the course of this voyage the whole eastern coast of Australia, from the latitude of Cape York—its most northern—to its most southward extremity, was for the first time visited and partially surveyed. Cook reached first the more southern

portion of this coast, and in advancing along it to the northward entered an inlet to which he gave the name (afterwards so well known) of *Botany Bay*, from the immense number of new plants found upon its shores. With infinite dexterity he subsequently conducted his vessel through the perilous navigation of the coral reefs lying further to the northward, and re-discovered the channel which separates Australia from the shores of New Guinea—first passed through (as we have seen) by the Spanish navigator, Torres, in 1606, but the existence of which had since been forgotten, or was at best regarded as doubtful. He here landed on a small island which immediately adjoins the coast in the neighbourhood of Cape York, and formally took possession of the immense line of coast along which he had sailed—upwards of 2000 miles in length—in the name of his sovereign, George III., King of Great Britain and Ireland, bestowing on it the appellation of *New South Wales*. This discovery and consequent procedure of Captain Cook constitutes the first great charter by which Britain claims the right to her wide-spread and important possessions in the Australian division of the globe. The little island on which the ceremony was performed received the name of *Possession Island*, which it has since retained, while the channel which divides it from the mainland was called *Endeavour Strait*, from the name of the navigator's vessel.

While the Dutch discoveries on the coasts of the "great south land" remained barren of result, and were even passing into comparative oblivion, it affords honourable evidence of the persevering enterprise justly attributed to our countrymen, and of the practical character which their

maritime undertakings have so often assumed, that the discoveries of Captain Cook were not lost sight of, but were, on the contrary, followed up at no distant period by the formation of a permanent settlement on these distant shores. The separation of the North American colonies from the mother country, in 1776, had deprived the English government of their ordinary means of disposing of the persons of convicted offenders against the law, and the attempted substitution of penal settlements on the western coast of Africa had proved unsuccessful, on account of the extreme unhealthiness of climate by which that region is characterised. After some unsatisfactory and fruitless efforts at the employment of convict labour at home, it was at length felt as absolutely requisite that some distant region should be selected as the site of a new penal settlement. Captain Cook's favourable account of the aspect of Botany Bay and the surrounding country was not forgotten, and it was determined by the government to transport thither the necessary materials for a colony, in which—while it was intended that convict labour should be systematically employed—it was also hoped that such advantages would ultimately be found as might induce free settlers to resort thither. An act of parliament was accordingly passed for the purpose, and a fleet of eleven sail—destined to convey the colonists to their distant home—assembled at Portsmouth in March, 1787.

The expedition was placed under the command of Captain Phillip, an officer of the Royal Navy, and a person whose subsequent proceedings showed him to be in every respect worthy of the confidence placed in him. The fleet

consisted of His Majesty's frigate "Sirius," the armed tender "Supply," three store ships, and six transports. On board of these vessels there were embarked about 600 male, and 250 female, convicts, under the charge of a guard of officers and marines—the total number of persons belonging to the expedition amounting to 1036. The fleet sailed from Portsmouth on the 13th of May, 1787, and after touching at Teneriffe, Rio de Janeiro, and the Cape of Good Hope, ultimately arrived at Botany Bay on the 20th of January, 1788, after a long but comparatively prosperous voyage of rather more than eight months.

Although Botany Bay had been named in Captain Phillip's instructions as the point to which he was first to direct his course, it had been wisely left to his own discretion to decide upon the actual site of the intended settlement. Botany Bay was soon found to be unsuitable for the purpose; besides being an unsafe anchorage, the land immediately around it is unserviceable, and, for the most part, sterile. Before, therefore, the greater number of the convicts had been permitted to disembark, Captain Phillip determined to go in search of a more eligible site, and one was found at the distance of only a few miles to the northward, where Captain Cook's chart exhibited an opening to which the name of Port Jackson had been given, from that of the seaman by whom it had been first observed. Cook had, however, passed the inlet of Port Jackson without further examination; but when entered—for the first time—by Captain Phillip and his party, it was at once seen to form one of the finest harbours in the world. The fleet was immediately removed thither, the whole of the convicts landed, and the British flag hoisted on

the banks of Sydney Cove—a small inlet on the southern side of Port Jackson, which had been fixed on for the site of the settlement—on the 26th of January, 1788, a day justly regarded as memorable in the annals of colonial history.

About a thousand individuals, subjects of the British Crown, but considerably more than three fourths of them convicted offenders against their country's laws, and banished from the shelter of her institutions, were landed, under the circumstances above described, on the shores of a distant region, separated by upwards of *fourteen thousand miles* from their proper home. Thus darkly and inauspiciously, and amidst the companionship of crime, degradation, and suffering, was planted the now flourishing and important colony of New South Wales!

CHAP. III.

Progress of the Colony. — Difficulties of the early Settlers. — Small proportion of Free Emigrants. — Successive Governors of New South Wales.

It does not belong to our purpose to trace in detail the history of the Australian colonies, or to dwell at any length upon the successive steps by which the settlers gradually obtained a fuller knowledge of the natural features, climate, and resources, of the country they had adopted as a home. But a few leading epochs in the narrative of these events may be advantageously referred

to, and form a proper preliminary to the subsequent contents of our volume.

A handful of men had been planted on the almost unknown shores of New South Wales. They knew nothing of the climate, or the capabilities of the soil, and saw little that was encouraging in the aspect of things around them. On the one hand was the boundless expanse of the Pacific Ocean, and on the other side a line of unknown and rugged heights—the Blue Mountains, which loomed far in the distance—bounded the western horizon. But it is not the practice of Englishmen to sit down in despair, when the exercise of active exertion affords the hope of bettering their condition; and our colonists, under the able direction of their governor, soon set vigorously to work.

After exploring the country immediately around Port Jackson, and surveying the neighbouring coasts, Captain Phillip's first care was to provide for the future subsistence of the colony, by rendering it, as soon as possible, independent of supplies from England. But this was a work of no little difficulty. Of the convicts (who formed, as we have seen, the great bulk of the settlers) very few knew anything of agriculture, and there were scarcely any among the free portion of the community who were capable of instructing them in this first and most necessary art. Upon leaving England, it had been arranged that the colonists should—for a time, at least—never be left without twelve months' provisions in advance. But the "Guardian" store-ship, which had, in pursuance of this arrangement, been dispatched in the course of the year following the departure of the settlers, was unfortunately

struck by an iceberg in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope. By the skill and intrepidity of her commander (the "gallant, good Riou," who afterwards met his death at Copenhagen) she was kept afloat for a time, and subsequently towed into Table Bay, where a portion of her stores were saved, and ultimately forwarded to their destination. Meanwhile, however, our colonists of New South Wales were reduced to great distress for want of the expected provisions. Famine had already begun to stare them in the face, and at one time—in February, 1790—there were not four months' provisions in the colony, even at *half allowance*!

The privations and sufferings of the first settlers were, indeed, very great, and a long period elapsed before a sufficient extent of soil had been got into cultivation to yield a return which might be safely depended on for a supply. The kind of crops most likely to succeed, with the proper seasons for sowing, and numberless other details, had of course all to be learnt by experiment. The occasional occurrence of inundations, succeeded by periods of distressing drought, were additional obstacles to success. It was, indeed, long before the colony was rendered independent of supplies from abroad; and during all the earlier period of its history provisions had to be frequently imported, at a great expense, from India, Batavia, and the Cape. No wonder, then, considering the danger and uncertainty of sea-voyages in those days, that the earlier settlers have been known to declare that during the first few years of their experience in the colony they "*lived in the constant belief that they should one day perish of hunger.*" A consolatory prospect, truly!

But Governor Phillip set the best example to patient endurance by cheerfully sharing the sufferings of the settlers, and restricting himself to the same daily ration as the meanest convict in the territory. And when, upon particular occasions, he felt called on by established etiquette to invite the officers of the colony to dine with him at Government House, he is said to have been accustomed to intimate that "they must bring their bread along with them, as he had none to spare." It is related that, on one of these instances, a humorous guest marched up to the governor's residence with his loaf—doubtless one of very small dimensions—stuck upon the point of his sword! Under such circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the idea of abandoning the settlement should have been actually entertained by some of its members, though it was at once overruled by the Governor.

At length, however (in June, 1790), a portion of the stores which had been saved from the "Guardian" reached the settlement; and in the following year the "second fleet" of vessels arrived from England—consisting of one of the ships of His Majesty's navy, accompanied by ten transports containing convicts. On board these vessels there had been embarked 1695 male and 68 female convicts, of whom no less than 194 males and 4 females died during the passage, and a large additional number died in hospital shortly after their arrival.

Henceforward, convicts continued to arrive in the colony in considerable numbers, intermixed with free emigrants only in a very limited proportion. The home government were glad of so ready a means of disposing of offenders, who would otherwise have remained to stock the gaols of

England, and whose removal to the other side of the globe — though at considerable cost — freed them from the more immediate pressure of many embarrassing considerations. Governor Phillip, and his immediate successors in the direction of the colony, strongly urged the policy of inducing free settlers also to proceed thither, by holding out encouragement in the way of grants of land on their arrival. But it can hardly be wondered at that people of respectability manifested in general no very strong anxiety to resort to a convict colony, there to herd with the outcasts of English society, and the progress of free emigration to New South Wales was at first very slow. Nor, indeed, until the attractive influence exercised by the gold discoveries of the present day, has it ever been commensurate with the real and solid advantages which the colony has all along possessed.

For a long while, however, the proportion of the free to the convict population was exceedingly small. In 1810, shortly after the commencement of Governor Macquarie's administration, the total population of the colony amounted to about 10,000, only a few hundred of whom were free emigrants. During the period of his administration, which lasted from 1809 to 1820, free emigration to the colony almost ceased, while convicts continued to arrive in increasing numbers; so that the proportion of the free to the convict inhabitants was continually decreasing. Under his successor — Sir Thomas Brisbane — a stream of free emigration began, indeed, to set in towards the shores of New South Wales, and has continued to flow, with greater or less rapidity, to the present time; but even in 1836 (nearly half a century after the foundation of the colony),

at which time the total population of the settlement amounted to upwards of 77,000, two fifths of the inhabitants consisted of convicts in actual bondage, while among the remaining three fifths were a large proportion who had only acquired their freedom either by the expiration of their sentences, or by pardon.

With such materials, it was difficult to meet with success in the employment of industrial means and appliances; still more difficult to lay the foundation of good government, to cherish the culture of religion and morality, and to promote the work of criminal reformation:—for the ultimate and progressive reformation of her criminals had been one of the main objects of government in the formation of this distant appendage to the empire of Britain. One of the early rulers of the colony, Governor King, complained that “he could not make farmers out of pickpockets,” a task which might truly be held not the most ready of accomplishment. And the remark attributed to a later governor (Macquarie), that “there were only two classes of individuals in New South Wales, those who *had* been convicted, and those who *ought* to have been so,” shows that (in the opinion of his Excellency, at any rate) even among that portion of the settlers whose distinguishing attributes might be presumed the least open to objection, there were not a few whose conduct was by no means free from blame.

The infant settlement had, indeed, all kinds of difficulties, both physical and moral, to contend against. There were droughts, inundations, consequent destruction of crops, with periods of scarcity and of fluctuation in the value of stock and the price of provisions; besides the not unfrequent, and sometimes serious, hostilities of the natives.

Added to these were the possession of numerous unfair and exclusive privileges by the officials of government, the military authorities, and other favoured individuals; the prevalence of habits of intemperance (rum being the liquid universally consumed, and indeed the common medium of exchange amongst all classes of the colonists); and, during the earlier records of the settlement, the mutual jealousies and disagreements between the governors of the colony and the officers of the New South Wales corps—a body which had been enrolled expressly for service in the colony. To such an extent did these proceed, as to lead in one instance—that of Governor Bligh—to the arrest of the governor, and the assumption of authority by the officer then in temporary command of the corps, Major Johnston; a case of sheer and rank rebellion which was afterwards subjected to strict investigation by the home authorities.

Captain Phillip, under whose able direction the colony had been founded, remained in charge of the settlement until the close of the year 1792. His successor, Captain Hunter—also a naval officer—did not arrive in the colony until 1795, its affairs having, during the interim, been directed by the commanding officer of the New South Wales corps. It was during Captain Hunter's government that the first free settlers arrived, as voluntary emigrants, in the colony. During his administration agriculture made considerable progress, and the prospects of the little settlement gradually brightened.

The third Governor of New South Wales was Captain King, in whose hands the direction of affairs rested from 1800 to 1806. He was succeeded by Captain Bligh, whose name had already become extensively known from

his connection with the mutiny of the *Bounty*, one of H.M. ships under his command. In January 1808, the authority of Governor Bligh was abruptly terminated in the manner above referred to, and towards the close of the succeeding year Lieut.-Colonel Macquarie, who had been appointed his successor, arrived in the colony.

Governor Macquarie was an officer of H.M. 73d regiment of the line (which had been appointed to take the place of the New South Wales corps), and was the first military governor of the colony, his four predecessors having all belonged to the naval profession. His government lasted for the unusually lengthened period of twelve years, and is perpetuated in memory by the numerous instances in which his euphonious patronymic has been attached to objects of nearly every description which the colony contains,—rivers, plains, harbours, farms, gardens, and buildings beyond number.

The succeeding rulers of New South Wales, from Governor Macquarie downwards, have been Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane (1821—1825), Lieut.-General Sir Ralph Darling (1825—1831), Major-General Sir Richard Bourke (1831—1837), Sir George Gipps (1837—1846), and Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, the present Governor-General of the Australasian Colonies.

The period of Sir Thomas Brisbane's administration is distinguished as the era of free emigration, which then first took place to any material extent. Most of the emigrants were persons possessed of some capital, since the great distance of the colony from the mother country, and the consequent expense of the passage, operated to prevent the resort thither of the humbler class of emigrants, to

whom the North American colonies and the newly settled territories of the United States have always held out greater attractions in this regard. Nor did New South Wales, until within a recent period, hold out any promise of advantage to the class of free emigrant labourers, owing to the large amount of convict labour which was nearly always at the command of the government, and assigned by them, on certain conditions, to the service of the settlers. During Governor Macquarie's time, the difficulty of finding employment for the numerous convicts who were continually poured into the territory led to the formation of mixed agricultural and penal settlements in various parts of the colony, besides facilitating the construction of roads and numerous other public works. At this period, indeed, so completely was the labour-market overstocked that large grants of land were readily made by the colonial government to any individuals who entered into an engagement to employ a certain number of convict servants. But at a subsequent time, when the influx of free settlers had become more considerable, the scales were turned, and the supply of convict labour fell greatly below the demand; so much so, that at one time, during Governor Darling's administration, there were applications for more than two thousand convicts lying unsatisfied in the office of the superintendent.

In 1841, transportation to New South Wales finally ceased, the home government having for some time previously afforded assistance, on certain conditions (which will be more particularly referred to in a subsequent page), to the labouring class of intending emigrants to the Australian colonies.

CHAP. IV.

Progress of Australian Discovery along the Coasts and in the Interior.
— Bass and Flinders. — First Passage of the Blue Mountains. —
Oxley, Cunningham, Sturt, Leichhardt, &c.

WHILE the fleet under Captain Phillip's charge was anchored in Botany Bay, and immediately prior to its removal thence to Port Jackson, two French vessels entered the bay for the purpose of refitment. They were the "Boussole" and the "Astrolabe,"—two ships which formed the expedition under the command of the gallant and unfortunate La Perouse, then in the prosecution of his well-known voyage of discovery. The French ships remained at Botany Bay for nearly two months, during which time a mutual interchange of civilities was kept up between the French and English commanders. La Perouse, full of hope and confidence in the future, was refitting his vessels and re-establishing the health of his crew in preparation for the further prosecution of his voyage; while the English officer was laying the foundations of the town of Sydney, and striving to plant the civilisation of an elder world on the then almost unknown shores of the southern continent. Each engaged in a worthy enterprise, but with how different a measure of success! La Perouse sailed from Botany Bay, and forty years elapsed before his after fate became known. On the shore of the bay there stands a monument erected to his memory, in the year 1825, by some of his countrymen whom accident had led to this distant region; as well as another monument erected by La Perouse himself, and commemorative of the

death of one of the companions of his voyage,—a French physician, who died while staying there of wounds received during an affray with the natives of one of the island-groups of the southern Pacific. Sad records, both, of the frequent fate of lofty enterprise and high-souled expectation!

Beyond the immediate shores of Port Jackson, all was at first an unknown region to the English colonists, and they had, with slow and cautious steps, to *feel* their way, as it were, towards a further acquaintance with the land which had become their home. They set to work at this task by water as well as by land, examining the shores to the north and south of Port Jackson, and with each successive endeavour pushing their way further and further along the coast. Broken Bay, an inlet to the northward of Port Jackson, and the river Hawkesbury, were among the early fruits of their labours; a few years later, the mouth of Hunter's River was discovered, and the fine tract of country which adjoins the banks of that stream, through its entire course, was explored.

To the southward of Port Jackson, two young Englishmen, named Bass and Flinders—the former a surgeon in the navy, the latter then a midshipman—adventurously sought their way along the coast in a little boat of no more than eight feet in length, to which they gave the name of the *Tom Thumb*. The memory of this smallest of exploring ships is preserved in our charts of the New South Wales coast by that of a lagoon yet called by its name. In the years 1795 and 1796, our bold adventurers in the “*Tom Thumb*,” with only a boy to assist them, pursued their way along a considerable line of coast,

examining minutely the various inlets to which they came, and encountering, as may be well supposed, numerous dangers and difficulties in the novel undertaking. Towards the close of 1797, while Mr. Flinders was otherwise employed, Mr. Bass was provided with a fine *whale-boat* (it must have seemed a vessel of considerable tonnage compared to his previous Lilliputian craft) *and a crew of six men*, to proceed on a more important voyage of discovery to the southward. An important (and not wholly unexpected) result ensued from this undertaking; namely, the discovery of the channel which separates Van Diemen's Land from the Australian continent, and to which the name of Bass's Strait was subsequently, and justly, given. On penetrating beyond the parallel of 39° south, Mr. Bass was rejoiced to find the coast trending in a westerly direction, and advanced along that course until he reached a fine inlet, to which he gave the appellation of Western Port. But the provisions he had taken with him were by this time consumed, and he was compelled to return; indeed, he had only been prepared for a voyage of six weeks' duration, but by replenishing his stock with fish and sea-fowl, taken on the way, his absence from Port Jackson had been protracted to the eleventh week. He had been the first to explore 300 miles of coast, and had accomplished safely a voyage of double that length in an open boat—an achievement justly regarded as one of the boldest in the records of navigation.*

* So highly did the colonists appreciate the merits of Mr. Bass's discoveries, that the boat in which he had made this voyage was long preserved as a curiosity, and snuff-boxes, or other articles, made of its keel, were considered of peculiar value.

Mr. Bass returned from this undertaking in February, 1798, and in the ensuing October accompanied Mr. Flinders, in a small schooner of twenty-five tons, on a voyage undertaken for the purpose of following up his discovery. They successfully accomplished the circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land, exploring the estuaries of the Tamar on its northern, and the Derwent on its south-eastern, coasts. The favourable account given of these inlets led to the establishment of settlements on their shores shortly afterwards.

The name of Flinders is amongst those which stand most prominently and honourably forward in connection with Australian discovery, and no single navigator has contributed so much towards an accurate knowledge of the coasts of the "Great South Land." The proofs of skill and intrepidity which he had given led to his appointment by the British government (on his return from the colony to England) to the command of the "Investigator," a ship expressly fitted out for the purpose of examining the Australian coasts. In this vessel Flinders explored, during the years 1802 and 1803, the greater portion of the southern coasts of Australia, besides the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the adjoining parts of the northern and eastern shores. He visited King George's Sound, in the S.W. part of the continent, and was the first explorer of the great inlets of Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs (now included within the colony of South Australia). In the neighbourhood of the latter he fell in with a French ship—the "Géographe"—engaged in an undertaking similar to his own, and, from this circumstance, bestowed the name of *Encounter Bay* on the broad arm of the Southern

Ocean in which the meeting occurred. Under a more easterly meridian, the attention of Captain Flinders was attracted by a fine inlet on the north side of Bass's Strait, and which he at first supposed to be the "Western Port" discovered by Mr. Bass. But finding this supposition erroneous, he bestowed on his discovery the name of "Port Phillip," in honour of the first governor of New South Wales—little anticipating that within the lapse of half a century its shores would be populous and busy as they now are, and its very name become possessed of an almost magical charm, exercising its influence wherever the love of gold, and the spirit of adventure, extend their power.

But in 1803, our enterprising explorer (at that time on his way to England to solicit the command of another ship, the "Investigator" having become unseaworthy) had the misfortune to be wrecked on the coral reefs which lie in close proximity to a large portion of the eastern shores of the Australian continent. He saved his crew, as well as that of a companion vessel which shared the disaster, and subsequently again put to sea, from Port Jackson, in a small schooner, which proved so leaky as to compel him to touch at the island of Mauritius, then a French possession. Here he was detained as a prisoner, and did not regain his liberty until 1810—greatly to the discredit of the governor of the island, and, indeed, of all persons concerned in so ungenerous a proceeding.

Our knowledge of the Australian coasts—interrupted in its progress for many years subsequent to the voyages of Captain Flinders—has steadily advanced during this last thirty-five years, and embraces at the present time

a tolerably accurate and detailed acquaintance with nearly every part of the shores of this southern continent, including minute and elaborate surveys of many portions. The names of King, Wickham, Grey, Stokes, Stanley, and others—officers of the British navy—are honourably recorded in connection with these labours, which, although wanting the brilliancy and striking character attaching to new discoveries, are of not the less real importance, or of less essential service to the interests of a great mercantile and maritime community.

The successive explorers of the Australian coast have all, however, been disappointed in one regard—the absence everywhere of any great fresh-water inlet, or river, which might afford the means of penetrating to the interior of the continent. Arguing from analogy, it was assumed that Australia, like other great portions of the earth, must somewhere possess such a river—that in some part or other of its shores there would be found a Nile, a Mississippi, a St. Lawrence, or an Amazon, by the channel of which the unknown interior might be reached, and its vast and pathless solitudes explored. But experience has proved the assumption erroneous, and no such river has been found. As one part of the coast after another was explored, the long-expected discovery was anticipated elsewhere; at one time the southern and western, at another the north-western or the northern coasts, were examined in the search, and, after all other parts had been explored in vain, the Gulf of Carpentaria appeared to hold out hopes to those who still advocated the hypothesis referred to. But Australia—anomalous in nearly all other regards—is equally so in the ordinary characteristic

of continental formation, and presents a problem in physical geography which it must be left for some future Humboldt to solve.

Meanwhile, our colonists (who, be it remembered, were, with the serviceable aid of their convict labourers, building up the good town of Sydney, the foundations whereof had been laid by Governor Phillip, in the year of grace, 1788,) gradually acquired, though with slower steps, some information respecting the interior of the land, in which they were, as yet, but "strangers." The convicts—both then and for a long while afterwards—had evidently but very vague notions respecting the geographical relations of "Botany Bay," since we find that in the earlier years of the settlement it was no unfrequent thing for them to make their escape in the idea of being able to travel *overland* to China, a hopeful project, on which no fewer than forty of them were at one time engaged! Nor, in all probability, was the information possessed by the voluntary portion of these exiles to a distant shore (in many cases, at any rate) of a very much more enlightened description, for geography is often found but a dry and uninviting study, even in the present day, with all the aid of maps to boot, and maps were much less generally accessible things in the latter part of the eighteenth, than in the middle of the nineteenth, century.

For a period of twenty-five years after the foundation of the settlement—that is, until 1813—the chain of the Blue Mountains, parallel to the eastern coasts, and at a distance of between sixty and seventy miles inland, constituted an impassable barrier to the enterprise of the colonists. They had explored the land for a considerable

distance to the northward and southward of Port Jackson, but to pass these rugged heights upon the west had hitherto been a fruitless effort. They had even become in some measure associated with mysterious thoughts, and linked in imagination with spiritual and dreaded influences. They were as impassable, and the regions beyond as unknown, to the natives of the country as to the colonists, and the former appeared to regard them as the abode of malignant spirits, who were possessed of unearthly and awful powers over the natural world. So readily does man, whether civilised or savage, link the marvellous with the unknown, and fancy conjure up the supernatural in connection with the invisible.

But—evil spirits notwithstanding—many bold efforts had, in the interim, been made by the colonists for the passage of these Blue Mountains. And not without good reason, for the narrow strip of territory between the mountains and the sea (at best of only moderate fertility) was fast becoming overstocked, and the settlers were in want of fresh pastures for their increasing flocks and herds. But the eastern face of the range presented everywhere a steep and precipitous escarpment, in the effort to scale which the boldest endeavours were vain. Mr. Bass, among others, made the attempt, but without the success which attended his later maritime adventures, though displaying abundant hardihood and address—surmounting precipices by the aid of iron hooks fastened to his arms, and descending by means of ropes to the bottoms of frightful caverns. At length, however, in the year 1813—when a severe drought had burnt up the herbage in the coast districts, and occasioned a serious mortality amongst

the cattle,—three of the settlers (their names well deserve preservation—they are those of Wentworth, Lawson, and Blaxland) repeated the attempt, with more of calculation and prudence, and with a better success. They discovered a route across the mountain-chain—afterwards improved by the engineers' skill into a good road, the great highway of intercourse between Sydney and the more distant parts of the colony—and thus threw open the boundless pasture-lands of interior Australia to the enterprise of their fellow-settlers. This was accomplished during the rule of Governor Macquarie, and it forms, with its immediate consequences, the most important feature of his period of administration, and one of the most note-worthy eras in the history of New South Wales.

The Blue Mountains once crossed, and a way to the interior laid open, the extensive pastures of Bathurst Plains were speedily occupied by the settlers, and fresh discoveries were shortly afterwards made, in various directions, towards the interior. The rivers Macquarie, Lachlan, and Murrumbidgee were successively discovered, and their courses traced, during the period between 1813 and 1819; and the upper portion of the river Murray, in a more southern direction, with the chain of the War-ragong, or Australian Alps, in 1824;—these achievements being due to the labours of Oxley, Cunningham, Hume (the latter gentleman a native of the colony), and other explorers. In 1829, Captain Sturt traced the upper course of a river on which he conferred the name of Darling; and, in the following year, the same officer explored the lower portion of the river Murray, which he pursued down to its

termination in the shallow expanse of Lake Alexandrina, upon the southern coast of the continent.

The subsequent labours of Sir Thomas Mitchell, Mr. Eyre, Dr. Leichhardt, and other adventurous explorers, have extended our knowledge of the southern and eastern portions of the interior, and enabled us to delineate the various features which appear upon our maps of this division of the globe. But interior discovery labours in Australia, as in Africa, under the difficulties arising from a parched soil, and a scanty supply of water—this necessary article being, indeed, often wholly wanting, for long periods together, and over extensive tracts of country. Hence, by far the larger portion of the inland regions of this southern continent have hitherto defied access, or have only been reached at the cost of much peril and suffering, in many cases even of life itself. Beyond the mountain-region which lies in the neighbourhood of the coasts, the country stretches out for the most part into wide plains, watered and fertile towards the mountains, but arid and barren further inland, covered in some cases with low sand-hills, and in others forming a hard and stony desert. Neither man nor cattle can readily advance in such a region. In 1845, Captain Sturt penetrated from the south coast—that is, from Adelaide, in South Australia—half-way across the continent, in the meridian of 138° E., finding in the heart of the interior a region wholly destitute of water, and equalling in sterility the worst parts of the African Sahara. This is the most distant point hitherto reached in a direct line from the coast; and the country through which our adventurer passed on this occasion affords but slight prospect of advantage to the future settler.

But in other directions, the eastern portions of the interior have been explored with more promising results, and extensive tracts of fertile country laid open. In 1844-5, Dr. Leichhardt, a German resident in the colony, crossed the continent from the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay (on the east coast, in lat. 27°) to Port Essington, upon its northern shores, a distance of 1800 miles, through a country which was previously altogether unknown, and large tracts of which were found to be of the most promising description. The same intrepid explorer again started, in 1848, on an expedition of interior discovery, from which he never returned, nor have any tidings been obtained of his ultimate fate, there being every reason to fear that he has either perished from want of provisions, or fallen a victim to some murderous attack on the part of the natives. The latter melancholy fate has been ascertained to have befallen Mr. Kennedy, another adventurer in the field of Australian discovery, who, after following up the discoveries of Sir Thomas Mitchell in a more southern parallel, had in 1848 started on an expedition for the purpose of reaching, by an overland route from Rockingham Bay (on the east coast), the promontory of Cape York, at the northern extremity of the continent, and of exploring the great peninsula which lies between the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Pacific. The cause of Australian discovery has thus, like that of African exploration, had its victims, in the sacrifice of more than one of those gallant spirits who were the first to brave the unknown dangers of the pathless wilderness.

But it is only in the south-eastern corner of the Australian continent that our actual knowledge has yet extended to any considerable distance inland. Elsewhere, it

is, for the most part, confined to a narrow belt, bordering on the shores of the circumjacent ocean. By far the greater part of the vast interior is yet a blank upon our maps, and is as completely a "Terra Australis incognita," in the present day, as it was represented upon the charts of the older navigators. Indeed, for anything that we know to the contrary, though it must be admitted that the supposition is not a very probable one, there may exist, in these unexplored regions, monsters of huge bulk and uncouth shape—men who realise Lord Monboddo's idea of the primitive type of humanity, and wag their tails behind them as they walk; or people of the anomalous form described by the poet, and "whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders!"

CHAP. V.

Natural Features of Australia. — Mountains. — Rivers. — Interior Plains.

AUSTRALIA lies wholly within the southern hemisphere. It is situated to the south-eastward of the Asiatic continent, between which and its shores there intervene the countless islands of the East Indian archipelago.

Some writers are in the habit of describing Australia as an island, whilst others (ourselves included in the number) more generally apply to it the term continent. This occasions confusion in the minds of some readers; but is readily explained by the aid of a map of the world, and a little reflection. Australia is, in reality, an *island-continent*,

if such a term may be used—that is, it has the essential characteristic of an island in being surrounded by the ocean, and thereby divided from the other portions of the globe,—while its vast magnitude equally entitles it to rank as a continent, and take its place as such among the greater divisions of the land.

Regarded as *insular*, Australia is by far the largest island on the globe: as *continental*, it is the smallest of the continents, being nearly one fifth less than Europe in superficial extent. But although of somewhat smaller dimensions than Europe, yet the unbroken form and compact shape of Australia, with the vast extent of solid land which stretches between its opposite seas, impart to its climate and productions a much more truly continental character than belongs to the greater portion of the European mainland.

The most northern point of the Australian continent is Cape York, which lies $10^{\circ} 42'$ to the south of the equator: its most southern extremity is Cape Wilson, in $39^{\circ} 9'$ south latitude. It stretches, therefore, in the direction of north and south through nearly $28\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ of latitude—equivalent to a length of 2000 miles in a direct line, and involving, of course, a wide range of difference in climate, soil, and productions of the natural kingdom. But the dimensions of Australia from north to south are not uniformly so considerable;—to the west of Cape York the northern shores are indented by the broad Gulf of Carpentaria, which advances a long way inland. The average breadth of the continent, however, is not less than 1200 miles, measured between its northern and its southern shores.

In the opposite direction—or from east to west—the dimensions of “the great south land” are still more con-

siderable, amounting to not less than 2400 miles in a direct line—a distance equal to that between London and the chain of the Ural Mountains, on the eastern limits of Europe, and nearly as great as that which intervenes between London and the banks of the river St. Lawrence, upon the opposite side of the Atlantic. The Pacific Ocean washes the eastern shores of Australia, the Indian Ocean its western or north-western coasts; the sea which bounds it to the southward is generally known as the Southern Ocean.

The channel of Torres Strait, which is situated to the northward of Australia, off Cape York, connects the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and intervenes between the Australian mainland and the large island of New Guinea. Torres Strait is 90 miles wide in its narrowest part; it forms the most direct, though not the most frequented, route for the homeward voyage from the coasts of New South Wales to Britain, and is directly in the track of vessels sailing between India and Port Jackson. But the navigation of this channel, and also of the sea which adjoins it to the eastward, is rendered exceedingly dangerous by the numerous coral islets and reefs with which it is everywhere studded.

From the neighbourhood of Cape York a chain of coral reefs, known collectively as the "Great Barrier Reef," extends along the eastern coasts of Australia as far southward as the parallel of $24^{\circ} 30'$, and at an average distance of about thirty miles from the land, though in some places it approaches much nearer to the shore. Numerous vessels have been lost upon various parts of this reef, which has only within a late period been accu-

rately surveyed; and the navigation of the adjacent seas requires the most extreme care. The narrow channel intervening between the reef and the shore affords a good and safe passage for vessels, with anchorage in about twelve fathoms of water, and there are a few openings by which ships can pass through the reef, between its outer and its inner sides. Upon its outward or eastern side the reef rises perpendicularly from the waters of a deep sea.

Bass's Strait, which lies to the southward of Australia, and divides it from the island of Tasmania, or Van Diemen's Land, also requires careful navigation, though much less dangerous than the more northern channel. It contains numerous small islets, and also some coral reefs. Westerly winds prevail in Bass's Strait during nine months of the year.

The Gulf of Carpentaria is the largest inlet on the Australian coast; its shores are for the most part low and flat, particularly on its eastern and south-eastern sides. It was a portion of the eastern shores of the gulf that was first explored by the Dutch ship "Duyfhen" in 1606.

Further to the westward, but also on the northern coast of the Australian mainland, is the Gulf of Van Diemen, which is nearly enclosed by a projecting tract of land named Coburg Peninsula, with the adjoining islands of Melville and Bathurst. The Gulf of Van Diemen was visited by Tasman in the course of his second voyage, and its appellation is one of the several instances in which he has commemorated his patron's name. Coburg Peninsula is indented on its northern side by the deep and narrow inlet of Port Essington, at the head of which a settlement

was formed by the British government in 1838, but was subsequently abandoned (in 1849), the climate, here strictly tropical, having been found decidedly unhealthy. Two previous attempts on the part of the British government, in 1824 and 1829, to form a permanent settlement on the northern coasts of Australia, had been similarly relinquished with unsuccessful results.

Upon the north-western coast there are several inlets of some magnitude, as Cambridge Gulf, Admiralty Gulf, and others; and about the middle of the western coast the large indentation of Shark's Bay, referred to in a preceding page in connection with the Dutch mariner, Dirk Hertog, from whom it received this appellation. On the southern seaboard are Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs, both of them deep estuaries, which indent the land to a considerable distance. The narrow neck of land which divides these gulfs is called York Peninsula, now included within the colony of South Australia. Off the entrance of St. Vincent's Gulf is Kangaroo Island, upwards of ninety miles in length, and forming in its interior a high table-land, covered with scrub. A long way further eastward, on the northern side of Bass's Strait, are the two fine inlets of Port Phillip and Western Port, both within the province which derives its most generally received name from the former.

Upon the eastern coasts of Australia—as well as in other parts of the continent—there are numerous good harbours, but no gulfs or inlets of any considerable magnitude. By far the finest of them—and, indeed, one of the most magnificent harbours in the world—is Port Jackson, on the shores of which the city of Sydney stands.

To the north and south of Sydney the coast of New South Wales is iron-bound, presenting to view an apparently unbroken line of high and precipitous cliffs of sandstone, against which the huge waves of the Pacific perpetually break. It is only when a vessel nears the shore that the opening of Port Jackson becomes visible—an opening in which the cliffs on either side bear the appearance of having been suddenly and forcibly rent asunder by some great convulsion of nature. Between the heads (as the cliffs at the entrance of the harbour are called), the breadth of the entrance does not exceed a mile, while to the eye of a spectator it appears much narrower, owing to the height of the cliffs, and the ideas impressed on the mind by the boundless expanse of ocean which lies without. On entering the harbour a scene of almost magical beauty and variety bursts upon the sight. The shores of Port Jackson seem as though they enclosed a large lake, which stretches far to the westward, with numerous receding inlets upon its northern and southern sides. Along one of these inlets—Sydney Cove—on the southern side of the harbour, are situated the older portion of the extensive ranges of building which belong to the Australian capital—the great mart of British commerce in the southern hemisphere.

Botany Bay—originally the destined seat of the New South Wales settlement, and the name of which hence continued long to be that by which the entire colony was familiarly known—is only a few miles to the south of Port Jackson. But its shores, although in the immediate vicinity of a populous city, are still almost as untenanted as when first visited by Captain Cook and his

fellow-voyager, Sir Joseph Banks, whose botanical tastes found here so much gratification.

From Port Jackson southward, the eastern coasts of Australia are deficient in harbours—Jervis Bay and Two-fold Bay—the only two deserving of notice—being both unsafe. But to the northward of Sydney, the coast is more diversified, and possesses several inlets to which vessels may resort in safety. Moreton Bay, near the northern limits of the province of New South Wales, as at present defined, is sheltered to the eastward by an advancing chain of islands, two of which—Stradbroke and Moreton Islands—are of some magnitude. On the line of coast further northward are Hervey, Halifax, Rockingham, Trinity, and numerous other bays.

The mountains of Australia, so far as at present known, are for the most part confined to the neighbourhood of the coasts. They appear to form a belt—not, however, continuous in every part—round nearly the entire continent. Between the hills and the sea there is in general an undulating and watered region, penetrated in many places by advanced spurs from the mountain-chain, and possessing a moderate degree of fertility. On their inland side the country forms a succession of upland downs, or table-lands, which gradually sink, towards the more distant interior, into wide-spread flat and level plains, with a slope so gradual as in many places scarcely to afford an outfall to the running waters. But there are exceptions to the generally hilly character of the coast districts; that portion of the southern coast which stretches westward from Spencer's Gulf to the neighbourhood of King George's Sound (or between the meridians of 118° and 134°) is almost

uniformly flat, sandy, and barren, and the adjoining land is only elevated to a trifling height above the level of the sea.

The highest known mountains in Australia are the Warragong, or Australian Alps, towards the south-east corner of the continent, and principally within the limits of the colony of Victoria (Port Phillip). The boundary line between this province and the adjoining colony of New South Wales crosses the chain.

The Australian Alps lie at a distance of between sixty and seventy miles from the coast; their most elevated summit (to which the heroic name of "Kosciusko" has been given) rises to 6500 feet above the sea-level, and is capped with perpetual snow. On all the higher portions of the chain, indeed, the snow lies during the greater portion of the year, and sometimes endures through the entire summer.

The Blue Mountains—already mentioned—stretch to the northward of the Warragong range, parallel to the eastern coast, and in the same general direction; as also do the heights still further to the northward, and upon a portion of which the name of the Liverpool Range has been bestowed. Indeed, the whole of these ranges are obviously but portions of a great cordillera, or chain of heights, along which the same characteristics of mineral formation prevail. It is in the valleys on the western face of this cordillera, and amongst its detached and outlying summits, that gold has been discovered of late in such extraordinary abundance.

The elevation of the Blue Mountains is not considerable—their highest summit, Mount York, being less than 4000

feet above the level of the sea; but they are everywhere steep and rugged, intersected by deep and precipitous ravines, which exhibit in many places stupendous chasms enclosed between walls of rock on either side. In traversing the range, some of the natural features of the scenery are of the boldest and most striking description. Indeed, were it not for the comparative scarcity of water, there is much in the scenery of New South Wales capable of rivalling in attractiveness the finest prospects of the landscape afforded by the mountain-scenery of our own islands. But the total absence of lakes, and the comparative insignificance of the rivers, are drawbacks to the beauty of prospects which are still, however, not without their charm. In several places where the tiny rivulet precipitates itself over the edge of a precipice, there would be formed—in other countries—a stupendous waterfall: and is so here for a time, during the brief period at which heavy rains fall.

A good road was formed across the Blue Mountains, leading to the plains of Bathurst, shortly after the discovery of the path by which the chain is traversed; and the skill of the engineer has been subsequently employed in facilitating the passage over them,—the large amount of convict labour which was formerly at the command of the government having enabled it to undertake works of this description more readily than in most new countries. Still, however, the precipitous heights up or down which the road is alternately carried are sufficiently formidable to require both skill and care on the part of the driver of any wheeled vehicle across them.

To the westward of the mountain-chain, and beyond the

Bathurst Plains, there is a detached mountain group, the summit of which, the Peak of Canobolas, is upwards of 4600 feet above the sea, and is frequently covered with snow during the winter. Indeed, for some distance to the west of the mountains, the country continues hilly, and exhibits detached hill-groups and insulated peaks. The Liverpool Range, which extends to the northward of the Blue Mountains, is in many places equally rugged, and in general of somewhat greater altitude. In the neighbourhood of the east coast, through its entire extent, there are numerous mountain-groups. Mount Lindesay, in the district of Moreton Bay, is nearly 6000 feet in altitude, and further to the north there are others of probably equal or greater elevation.

The fine upland downs—different portions of which are distinguished by the names of Liverpool Plains, Bathurst Plains, Brisbane Plains, Darling Downs, and similar appellations—lying on the inland side of the mountain-chains of the east coast, constitute the most valuable feature in the natural formation of Australia. They are the great grazing-grounds of the New South Wales colony, and afford sustenance to the almost countless flocks and herds of the settlers. Tracts similarly adapted for pasturage also occupy the interior of the more southern province of Port Phillip, to the west and north-west of the Warragong Chain. The rapid increase in the number of their sheep and oxen, with the influx of new settlers, is continually pushing the limits of these pasture-lands (or squatting-districts, as they are termed) further and further towards the interior of the continent, and there seems at present to be no limit to their extent in this direction. Sterile and

worthless tracts occur in particular places, it is true, but beyond or among these are again found "runs" of a superior description, so as to enable the squatter whose flocks have increased beyond the capabilities of his present allotment, to advance another step into the wilderness, and remove his fleecy treasures to "fresh fields and pastures new."

On the southern side of the Australian continent, a chain of heights stretches in a direction parallel to the shores of St. Vincent's Gulf, at a distance of about twenty miles inland. Some of its summits exceed 3000 feet in altitude, but the average height is considerably less. Hill-ranges also extend along great part of the western coast, but they are in general only of trifling height, rarely exceeding 2000 feet above the sea.

No active volcanoes have been discovered in Australia, nor have any shocks of earthquakes been experienced in the settled districts. Some extinct volcanoes, with distinctly-marked craters, occur in the neighbourhood of the south coast, near the river Glenelg (141° E. long.), and traces of volcanic action have been noticed in other parts. To the southward of the Liverpool Range, in the upper part of the district of Hunter's River, there is a bituminous hill, named Mount Wingen, which exhibits an intense degree of heat, and continually emits sulphureous vapours. These vapours arise from innumerable fissures on the surface of the mountain, and are accompanied by a brilliant flame, visible from a considerable distance at night-time, though scarcely perceptible during the day. The margins of the different fissures are encrusted with beautiful crystals of sulphur, and there is a black, tarry, and bituminous sub-

stance on the edges of some of the chasms. But there is no appearance of any crater, no subterranean explosion or noise of any kind, and no trace of lava.

It is in regard to rivers that the prime defect of Australian geography occurs. Not that they are by any means absent, or even otherwise than numerous, but the rivers of this southern continent are in general of trifling proportions and slender volume of water compared with those of most other parts of the globe. All the rivers of Australia, like those of the warmer latitudes in general, vary greatly in depth and body of water with the season of the year, even its larger streams being shrunk into greatly diminished proportions during the long and frequently intense heats of summer. The smaller streams become at this time wholly dried up, or else converted into a chain of ponds, which occupy at intervals the deserted bed of the water-course. In travelling in the interior, it is no uncommon thing for the thirsty and expectant wayfarer to come upon the bed of some creek (nearly all the smaller streams of the interior are, somewhat absurdly, called by the name of "creek") which on a former occasion he has left filled with a running stream, and to find it wholly destitute of even a drop of the precious fluid. Depending for a supply, not on any perennial springs, but on the mere surface drainage ensuing from the rains, these interior creeks, while at times utterly parched and arid, present the evidence of tremendous floods pouring through them at particular seasons. During the droughts which prevail at intervals in New South Wales, and which form the chief drawback to its otherwise fine climate, it is customary to see the great road

across the mountains, by which the produce of the interior is conveyed to Sydney, strewed with the carcasses and whitened bones of oxen that have perished by the way, from inability to find a spring or reservoir of water whence to slake their thirst, and on such occasions it is no uncommon thing for the cattle to perish by hundreds. Much of this evil might be avoided by the construction of dams or embankments across a few of the numerous deep ravines, so as to retain the abundant waters of the rainy season, and thus constitute a reservoir for future supply.

The most extensive system of rivers in Australia belongs to the basin of the Murray, in the south-eastern portion of the continent.

The river Murray rises upon the western slope of the Australian Alps, and flows for the greater portion of its course in a westerly direction. Nearly under the meridian of 140° it makes a great bend (or "elbow," as it is locally termed) to the southward, and finally enters the sea at Encounter Bay, passing immediately above its mouth through the extensive and shallow morass of Lake Alexandrina. In the upper and middle portions of its course the Murray forms the boundary between the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria; its lower course is within the province of South Australia. On its way to the sea, and in the westerly portion of its channel, it is joined from the northward by the rivers Murrumbidgee and Darling, the latter of which collects the waters of numerous tributary streams in its upper course. The Murrumbidgee, before joining the Murray, receives the waters of the Lachlan, a stream of considerable length.

All the above-named rivers flow from the western side

of the Blue Mountains or other ranges of the eastern coast, and have their upper courses directed towards the interior. The whole area of the country watered by the Murray is probably upwards of 200,000 square miles, and the length of the main channel exceeds 1200 miles.

In the tributaries of the Murray, as well as in the upper portion of the main stream, the volume of water, excepting at particular seasons, is trifling. But, in its lower course, the Murray becomes really a considerable stream. At its junction with the Murrumbidgee (about 300 miles above the "elbow") its channel is 350 feet broad, with a depth of from 12 to 20 feet. Below the point at which it receives the Darling (still considerably upwards of 200 miles above its mouth) its breadth becomes increased, and thence to its entrance into Lake Alexandrina the Murray is from 100 to 250 yards broad, while its depth varies from 40 feet—which it retains for a long distance from the lake upwards—to occasional shallows of 12 feet, the latter being the minimum depth of water in this portion of its course. Its current is trifling, varying from half a mile to a mile and three quarters an hour. The course of the river is here between high banks, formed entirely of fossiliferous deposits of shells, which in some places approach close to the water and in others recede to one or two miles inland, leaving "flats" of fertile alluvial land along the river's margin. Between its southerly bend, or "elbow," and its entrance into Lake Alexandrina, the Murray is admirably adapted for the purposes of steam navigation, to which, indeed, it seems beyond a doubt that it will ere long be applied,—especially as the colonial government

has recently held out the inducement of a premium for its accomplishment.

Lake Alexandrina (or Victoria, as it is sometimes called), through which the Murray passes on its way to the sea, is a fine sheet of water, twenty-seven miles long by twenty-three broad. But it is shallow throughout, varying from six to nine feet in depth, and the channel by which it communicates with the sea is exceedingly narrow and dangerous. This lake appears to be in gradual process of filling up, owing to the accumulation of sedimentary deposits brought down by the river. The water of Lake Alexandrina is fresh near the entrance of the Murray, but becomes brackish towards the sea. It communicates, to the eastward, with a smaller body of water, called Lake Albert, which is also brackish, as well as (towards the south-east) with a long and narrow salt-water estuary called Lake Coorong, which runs for a considerable distance parallel to the coast of Encounter Bay.

Some of the rivers which flow from the highlands of the east coast towards the interior are lost in the immense flats of the latter region, and terminate without reaching the sea—at least, by any direct channel. This is the case with the river Macquarie, which is formed by the union of several small streams rising on the western slope of the Blue Mountains, and, after flowing for 300 miles in a north-westerly direction, is lost amidst a tract which consists alternately of extensive marshes or of an arid plain, according as the dry or the rainy season prevails. The superfluous water of the Macquarie marshes, however, eventually finds its way to the channel of the river Darling.

Further to the northward, and at a considerably greater

distance in the interior, Sir Thomas Mitchell discovered, in 1846, and followed for a distance of 200 miles, a stream to which he gave the name of Victoria River, and which appeared at first to give promise of a lengthened course across the interior of the continent, towards the northern coasts. But it was afterwards found by Mr. Kennedy to turn to the south-westward, and probably joins a stream named Cooper's Creek by Captain Sturt, which that gentleman describes as containing permanent sheets of water, of great depth, with well-wooded banks. Cooper's Creek flows from east to west, and is crossed by the boundary line between New South Wales and South Australia; its waters are probably absorbed either in the sandy plains of the interior, or in the marshy tract of Lake Torrens, near the head of Spencer's Gulf. Indeed, with the exception of the Murray and its tributaries, none of the rivers flowing from the inland side of the mountain-region, *towards* the interior, have hitherto been found to preserve a course to the sea. And these rivers of Australia differ from the rivers of other parts of the world in this regard, that whereas the latter generally increase in breadth and volume of water towards their mouths, or in the lower portions of their courses, the former for the most part *decline* in importance as they advance, becoming at length so dwarfed and shrunken that their waters are unable to force a way through the vast and arid flats that spread around, and are ultimately absorbed by the thirsty soil.

In New South Wales the coast-rivers are, many of them, fine streams, and they preserve for the most part a perennial supply of water. Their courses are generally short, being limited to the narrow belt of country between

the mountains and the ocean; but the upper valleys of several among them lie in a longitudinal direction (or parallel to the general bearing of the mountain-chains), so that their total length of channel is greater than it would be if they more immediately crossed the intervening plain on their way towards the sea. The upper valleys of the Shoalhaven, the Hawkesbury, and the Hunter, are all of this description. The river Hawkesbury enters the sea at Broken Bay, an inlet situated a few miles to the northward of Sydney. Hunter's River, still further north, is navigable by small vessels for a distance of fifty miles inland, and by steamers in its lower course: the banks of this river and its tributaries are among the oldest settled, as well as the best cultivated and most productive, districts of New South Wales. Still further north are the rivers Manning, Hastings, McLeay, Clarence, Richmond, Brisbane, and others, of some among which a fuller notice will be taken in a subsequent page.

The principal stream upon the western coast of Australia is Swan River, the name of which is commonly applied to the settlement formed upon its banks. Swan River, however, though bringing down the waters, during seasons of flood, from a considerable distance in the interior, is a mere torrent, at times almost dried up, or converted into a chain of ponds. But when swelled by the rains, it pours down an immense volume of water, which sweeps everything before it in its rapid and violent course. All the rivers found on the adjoining portions of the Australian coast are of similar character, and possess only a trifling share of importance. The south coast, for nearly the entire distance from King George's Sound to Spencer's Gulf, has no

running streams, nor does it contain a single pool or water-course of any description.

On the north and north-western coasts there are many river-mouths or fresh-water estuaries, some of them broad and deep streams, but with narrowing banks, and rapidly diminishing channels, in an inland direction. One of them (to which the name of Victoria was given by Captain Wickham, who first explored it) was ascended to a distance of eighty miles inland. Adelaide River, on the same coast (further to the eastward), is navigable for vessels drawing twelve feet water to a distance of fifty miles from the sea, flowing through rich alluvial flats.

Australia is still more deficient in lakes than in rivers. There are, indeed, temporary lakes, and those sometimes of vast size, formed during the rains, which afterwards dry up or become converted into marshes. Lake Torrens, which appears on the maps to the northward of Spencer's Gulf, is only an immense salt swamp; at times it is almost dry, but at other seasons discharges a considerable stream into the head of the gulf, by means of which drift-wood of large size is not unfrequently floated down. There are small salt-lakes, or lagoons, on many parts of the coast, both in New South Wales and elsewhere.

In the absence of great rivers, or extensive bodies of water of any kind, upon most portions of the Australian coasts, it was long a favourite idea with theoretical geographers that the interior of this continent would be found to contain a great inland sea or internal reservoir of waters. But the results of such interior discoveries as have been made of late years show fully the groundlessness of this supposition, and render it in the highest degree probable

that the more central regions will be found to consist of arid tracts of sand or gravel, alternating with the dried-up beds of lakes,—such, in fact, as the region penetrated by Captain Sturt, to which reference has been made in a previous page.

In the vast plains of interior Australia—as in the African and Arabian deserts—the phenomenon of the *mirage* is often witnessed, imaginary pools of water in the distance raising the expectations and exciting the hopes of the traveller, only to vanish from sight as he approaches them. The features of the landscape sometimes become inverted in an extraordinary manner, the distant trees appearing with their heads suspended in the air, and seemingly separated from their trunks by a watery medium. Occasionally, in the early morning, the apparent outline of a range of hills becomes distinctly visible on the verge of the horizon, their forms varying as the day advances, and the entire ridge at length gradually melting “into thin air,”—the whole vision being, in fact, no more than “such stuff as dreams are made of.”

Similar phenomena are, indeed, not unfrequently witnessed in all parts of the Australian continent, the result of the varying densities in the strata of the air, produced by the powerful action of the solar rays reflected from its parched and heated soil. The mirage is frequently observed within the Port Phillip district, at well as in the neighbouring province of South Australia, both in the interior and near the coast.

CHAP. VI.

Climate of Australia.

IN speaking of the climate of Australia, it should be remembered that a wide range is taken, and that allowance requires to be made for very considerable diversities,—due to difference of latitude, as well as to the varying circumstances of inland or maritime position, with many other considerations. All the northern portion of the Australian continent—embracing not much less than the half of its entire extent—falls within the limits of the torrid zone. We find here an intensely heated atmosphere, and a climate which is strictly tropical. At Coburg Peninsula, within little more than eleven degrees of the equator, the mean annual heat is as great as that experienced at Calcutta and Madras, and exceeds by several degrees the average temperature of Sydney or other places within the settled portions of Australia. But in the southern and south-eastern portions of the continent—that is, in the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia,—the average temperature, in the coast districts, is not higher than that experienced in the south of Europe, though in some portions of the distant interior a greater degree of heat is not unfrequently felt.

Even within the limits of either province, considerable differences of climate are experienced. Thus, in New South Wales, the district of Moreton Bay, in the north,—and lying only a few degrees distant from the tropic,—is

uniformly much hotter than Sydney, which is between six and seven degrees (or from 400 to 500 miles) further to the southward; while Sydney, again, has a temperature several degrees higher than Bathurst, situated beyond the Blue Mountains, at a considerable elevation above the level of the sea, or than that of the upland plains in general. This cooler temperature enjoyed by the settlers in the elevated downs which lie beyond the mountains, as compared with the inhabitants of Sydney and other towns on the coast, is evidenced in the ruddier complexions, and more roseate bloom of health, which it helps to impart to the former, and in their generally robuster and hardier frames.

Measured by an English standard, however, the climate of every part of Australia is hot—though it is a kind of heat to which the settler soon becomes accustomed, and learns to bear, not only without inconvenience, but even with a large amount of positive gratification. It is not a heat productive of lassitude,—like that of India or of tropical America: instead of deadening the active faculties, it rather raises them (except under the influence of particular and temporary circumstances) to the highest amount of vigorous enjoyment. Out-door occupations which, under a similar temperature, it would in most parts of the globe be found nearly impracticable to pursue, are there carried on without the smallest injury to the constitutions of those engaged in them. This results, in a great degree, from the extreme dryness of the atmosphere—a quality which is one of its most essential characteristics. Hence the general healthiness of an Australian climate, and the almost uniform freedom from pulmonary and other

complaints which a humid atmosphere is so liable to engender.

Another circumstance which contributes to the healthiness of this portion of the globe, is the general uniformity of temperature enjoyed during the greater part of the year, although this is less conspicuous at Sydney and other maritime localities, where changes from extreme heat to comparative cold are by no means unfrequent. But even there the range of the thermometer is much less than that experienced in most countries on the northern side of the equator, especially within the temperate latitudes. With the exception, indeed, of the intense and almost overpowering heat of the summer season, an Australian climate is for the most part remarkably equable in its degree of warmth.

At Sydney—the capital of New South Wales—the mean temperature of the year is 65° of Fahrenheit; the mean heat of summer 74° ; of winter 55° ; and of the hottest and coldest months, respectively, 75° and 54° . At Moreton Bay, the mean annual temperature is 68° —that of the hottest month 78° , and of the coldest 54° . For the sake of comparison with London (the standard most universally intelligible to an English reader), it may be worth while to observe that the figures which represent the similar climatological features of the British capital are—for the average yearly heat 50° , the average of summer 63° , of winter 39° , and of the hottest and coldest months 60° and 37° ; a much greater range of difference between the opposite seasons than is experienced in any part of the Australian colonies.

The difference between the mean summer and winter temperatures of Sydney amounts to only 18° , and that

between the hottest and coldest months does not exceed 21° . At Melbourne (Port Phillip), lying in a somewhat higher latitude, and enjoying a correspondingly cooler atmosphere, the mean range of temperature is restricted within still narrower limits—the difference between the mean of summer and winter being only 16° , and that between the hottest and coldest months less than 19° . Compare (or rather contrast) this with the climate of Boston or Philadelphia—where a summer which averages above 70° is succeeded by a winter of 27° or 30° (occasionally sinking to an intense degree of cold), and where the thermometer not unfrequently shows a difference of more than 30° within the course of a single day,—and the superiority of the climate enjoyed by our colonists in the southern hemisphere will be at once manifest.

In so far as temperature is concerned, the coast regions of New South Wales present no material difference from Lisbon, Gibraltar, or other places in the south of Europe. Lisbon has a mean annual temperature of 61° , Gibraltar of 67° ; and in both places the amount of difference between the mean heat experienced at the opposite seasons of the year exactly coincides with that of Sydney. The summer heat of Sydney is as high as that of Naples, Constantinople, and Algiers, on the Mediterranean coasts, and higher than that of Philadelphia or Baltimore, on the opposite side of the Atlantic; while its winter coincides with that of Sicily, or with the correspondent season at the Cape of Good Hope.

During nine months of the year, indeed, the climate of New South Wales, and of the neighbouring colonies, is in the highest degree healthful, agreeable, and even (ac-

according to the testimony of not a few who are practically conversant with its merits) invigorating; the perfect clearness and dryness of the atmosphere being productive of an elasticity of frame which influences pleasurable both mind and body. It is only during the summer that the heat is felt as oppressive, and then it is really intense, — the thermometer ranging, in the open air, and in the shade, from 85° or 90° to upwards of 100° , and not unfrequently reaching a still higher point — sometimes even as high as 118° .

But this extreme heat is only experienced during the occasional prevalence of winds which blow from the interior of the continent, and is fortunately of brief duration. In New South Wales these hot winds generally occur about four times in each succeeding summer, and blow for a period of from twenty-four to thirty-six hours each time. In their origin and character they are probably analogous to similar winds experienced in other parts of the globe (as in Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and elsewhere), and are, perhaps, connected with a great and widely-extended system of atmospheric currents moving in rotary courses, and the laws regulating which are as yet only imperfectly traced.

The hot wind of Australia and Van Diemen's Land (for a similar phenomenon is of occasional occurrence in that island) exerts an extremely injurious influence upon vegetation, both indigenous and exotic, during its brief prevalence. All the grasses and leguminous plants are parched by it, and the fruit of the fig, as well as that of the vine, is destroyed. The red and blue grapes commonly lose their colour and their watery elements; the

either) its effect is particularly destructive of every sense of comfort; the dried and dust-besprinkled skin acquiring for the time some resemblance to parchment, and the hair feeling more like hay than any softer material.

Similarly heated blasts from the interior are of occasional occurrence in the other Australian colonies—their direction varying in some degree with the respective situation of particular places. At Adelaide, in South Australia, and also at Melbourne, these hot winds blow from the northward, and raise the temperature of the air like the blast of a furnace. The province of Victoria, which lies in a more southern latitude than either New South Wales or South Australia, enjoys in general a milder temperature; but even here the settler occasionally experiences a day of tremendous heat—the hot wind blowing, in a continuous and steady breeze, during the whole day and night, and keeping up the thermometer at 110° in the shade.

The mean annual temperature of Melbourne (Port Phillip) is 57° , the mean of summer 65° , and that of winter 48° . Adelaide has a mean yearly temperature of 65° , with a mean summer of 82° , and a winter of 56° . At the latter place, the maximum heat (in the shade) shown by the thermometer during a period of ten years was 102° , and the minimum 45° . Western Australia—or that portion of it which includes the Swan River settlement—resembles the other parts of the Australian continent in the general purity and dryness of the atmosphere, and is unusually exempt from the hot winds which are found to occur elsewhere. Westerly winds prevail on this portion of the coast, and are cooled by their passage over the waters of the

Indian Ocean. In a similar manner, on the coast of New South Wales, winds which blow from the eastern quarter of the heavens, charged with the cooling vapours derived from the immense expanse of the Pacific, are the most refreshing and invigorating in their influence.

On all parts of the Australian coast—especially those which are situated near, or within, the tropic—alternate land and sea breezes prevail during the warm portion of the year. The cooling sea breeze, which generally sets in during the earlier portion of the day, and becomes more steady and powerful towards the afternoon, serves to temper the otherwise intense heat of an Australian summer. In the mornings and evenings, too, the air is nearly always calm and pleasant, and the nights almost uniformly cool and refreshing. Owing to the perfect dryness of the air, a person may sleep beneath the open sky almost throughout the year, without experiencing any injurious consequences.

Snow—as may be inferred from what has been said above—is a phenomenon of very rare occurrence in the coast districts of Australia. Dr. Lang mentions a shower of snow as occurring at Sydney during the winter of 1836—the first that had been seen in that part of New South Wales. The juvenile portion of the population, who had never before seen anything of the kind, looked with great surprise on the phenomenon, which they called “white rain.” The winter evenings, however, are cool, and a good fire is by no means an unwelcome accompaniment. But in the more elevated districts of New South Wales, beyond the Blue Mountains, heavy falls of snow sometimes take place, and the winter is there by no means devoid of rigour—the ground being often found in the morning

covered with a bright hoar frost. In the winter of 1850, so unusually heavy a fall of snow occurred in the neighbourhood of Bathurst, that the face of the country was extensively strewn with branches of gum-trees which had been broken down by the weight of the drift—a scene which must have called up vivid and cherished remembrances of “home” in the minds of many a settler under these southern skies.

It is in the periodical character of its rains that an Australian climate exhibits one of its most strongly marked features. The rains are not dispersed through the year, as in Britain, and in most countries situated within similar latitudes of the temperate zone, but fall at particular seasons, and with undeviating regularity. The rainy season, in all the Australian colonies, coincides with the winter months; that is, the period between June and September. In fact, an Australian winter bears considerable resemblance to a wet English summer, and is distinguished much more by the circumstance of its heavy rains, than by any very striking difference of temperature from the months by which it is preceded and followed. During this brief portion of the year, the rain comes down in torrents,—forming *sheets*, rather than showers, of rain—filling all the water-courses with inconceivable rapidity—swelling insignificant (and almost dried-up) brooks into deep and powerful rivers, and frequently rendering extensive tracts of country altogether impassable, until the waters have subsided. In the towns, every highway becomes, for the time, a river—every by-way is converted into a torrent, and every bank into a cataract.

Notwithstanding the dryness generally, and justly, at-

tributed to the Australian climate, it appears probable that the actual quantity of moisture annually precipitated in most parts of Australia is fully equal to that which occurs in the majority of European countries. In many parts of Australia, indeed, the annual quantity is considerably above the average of that which falls in several localities within our own country. The mean quantity of rain which falls yearly at Sydney is stated to amount to fifty-two inches, and at Moreton Bay (further to the northward) it sometimes exceeds sixty-three inches.

If we may trust the observations that have been made, the quantity of rain which occasionally falls, within a brief period, in some parts of Australia, is truly extraordinary. According to Strzelecki, as many as twenty-five inches of rain are recorded to have fallen at Port Jackson within a period of twenty-four hours—an amount that is scarcely paralleled even within the experiences of the East and West Indies, or other countries within the tropics! Permanent evidence of the extraordinary quantity and violence of the rains, is, indeed, by no means wanting in Australia. On the western side of the dividing range, near the Namoy River (New South Wales), marks of extraordinary floods are found: floating bodies, such as grass, rushes, dried branches and bushes, remaining attached to the trees at the prodigious height of ten feet from the ground—the channel having been excavated to that depth by the overwhelming force of the torrent. Similar appearances are also observed in other localities, even those which are, at other times, subject to the influence of long-continued drought.

The absolute quantity of rain observed to fall annually

at six principal localities in Australia and Van Diemen's Land, during a period which included upwards of 8700 days of observation, is given in the following Table; for which we are indebted to Count Strzelecki's valuable work* :—

	NEW SOUTH WALES.			VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.		
	Port Macquarie.	Port Jackson.	Port Phillip.	Wool-north.	Circular Head.	Port Arthur.
Summer . . .	37·58	24·42	13·25	19·68	11·31	16·94
Winter . . .	25·10	28·00	17·47	29·07	24·11	17·75
Annual quantity .	62·68	52·42	30·72	43·75	35·42	44·69
Annual average quantity for each Colony . . .	-	48·60	-	-	41·28	-

But, notwithstanding this distribution of average annual moisture, most distressing droughts sometimes occur in New South Wales, when not a drop of rain falls for months and months in succession, and the face of the country becomes completely parched. At such times, the cattle perish by hundreds, from inability either to find water, or to extract any nutriment from the surface of the dried and burnt-up soil. Instances have even occurred in this province of no rain (or scarcely any) falling within periods of two or three years' duration.

These periodical droughts form the worst feature in the climate of New South Wales, and are productive, as may

* At the period when this table was drawn up, Port Phillip (now a separate province) was included within the limits of New South Wales.

well be supposed, of the most serious injury to the great pastoral settlers, or *squatters*, of the interior. They appear to recur, in general, at intervals of about ten or twelve years apart. Both South Australia and Port Phillip are fortunately free from them, and possess a more uniform and regular supply of moisture. In the latter province, about thirty inches of rain are said to occur annually; and, in both colonies, the quantity is nearly always found sufficient to afford the requisite nourishment to the crops. At Adelaide, during a period of eleven years, the greatest quantity observed, within any one year, was twenty-six inches, and the least seventeen inches,—showing, on the whole, a remarkable uniformity in this regard, and concurring, in this respect, with other favourable circumstances in the climatology of the South Australian province.

The Australian seasons occur at precisely the opposite periods of the year to our own—the English summer coinciding with the Australian winter, and the reverse. December, January, and February are there the hottest months of the year—June, July, and August, the coldest. Our spring corresponds to the autumn of the Australian world; and the months between September and November mark, in these southern latitudes, the period which immediately precedes the heats of the summer season. Again, the intense heat of the mid-day sun comes from the *northern*, instead of the southern, point of the sky: the south wind is cooling in its influences, and the northerly gales, instead of being associated with the ideas proper to “rude Boreas, blustering railer,” are, as we have seen, almost suffocatingly hot. These peculiarities, of course, powerfully

attract the notice of one who visits the southern hemisphere for the first time, and interfere strangely with the accustomed and cherished associations of an English mind. The festivities of Christmas take place during the intensest heat of the Australian summer; and the ball-room, filled with a company assembled in honour of the commencing year, is decorated with the gayest and brightest of flowers, freshly-plucked, in their fullest bloom. The antipodal Christmas is, indeed (as a recent and lively, as well as observant, writer on Australia remarks*), completely un-English. "Sitting in a thorough draught, clad in a holland blouse, you may see men and boys dragging from the neighbouring bush piles of green stuff (oak branches in full leaf and acorn, and a handsome shrub with a pink flower and pale green leaf—the "Christmas" of Australia) for the decoration of churches and dwellings, and stopping every fifty yards to wipe their perspiring brows."

But the colonist soon grows accustomed to these and similar anomalies, and gladly reconciles himself to even the admitted drawbacks to the charms of an Australian climate (in the shape of excessive heat, dust, drought, and, worse than all, countless swarms of flies, mosquitoes, and other insect plagues), in consideration of its many advantages, and, foremost among them, its almost uniformly bright and glowing sky, its pure and transparent atmosphere. For at least 300 days of the year fair weather may, with almost perfect certainty, be reckoned on, and whatever of out-door work or pastime may have been planned for the morrow is pretty certain of meeting with no "skiey" impediments to its performance. Sunshine is

* Lieut.-Col. Mundy, "Our Antipodes, &c." London, 1852.

there the rule, clouds the rare exception; and the clause of "weather permitting" never forms part of any treaty in which out-of-door arrangements are involved.

The testimony borne by residents of all classes to the extraordinary healthfulness of the Australian climate, and its perfect suitability to the English constitution, is almost uniform. Dysentery and ophthalmia—the latter from the frequent presence of dust in the air—are the most prevalent diseases; and during the spring a kind of influenza is not unfrequent in the towns, especially among the juvenile members of the population. Coughs and colds—those universal attendants of a humid atmosphere—are nearly unknown in Australia.

CHAP. VII.

Natural Productions of Australia. — Forest-trees. — Shrubs, Flowers, Grasses, &c. — Animals. — Kangaroos, Opossums, &c. — Birds. — The Emu, Bustard, Parrots, Cockatoos. — Serpents. — Insects. — Fishes.

THE native productions of Australia, vegetable and animal alike, are almost all strikingly dissimilar from those of any other part of the globe. The forest-trees are all evergreens, and consist chiefly of the genus *eucalyptus*, embracing a vast variety of gum-trees, many of them of gigantic growth. Acacias are also numerous, together with tree-ferns and nettles of enormous magnitude, besides many similar plants which in Europe only attain the size of ordinary weeds. The trees of an Australian forest have

in general fewer branches, and spread out laterally in a less degree, than those of Europe, shooting upwards more directly into the air, and possessing comparatively a smaller number of leaves. Both the eucalyptus and the acacia likewise present their leaves in a vertical instead of a horizontal direction, affording hence a less density of shade than is given by the forest-trees of other parts of the globe.

The only portions of Australia in which the native vegetation resembles that of other countries are its northern and north-eastern coasts, where the numerous palms and other tropical plants remind the observer of the botanical productions of the adjacent Indian archipelago. Palms occur in greater or less abundance along nearly the entire eastern coast of the Australian continent, as far south as the district of Illawara, to the southward of Sydney. But they are not found further either to the south or the westward. In the Illawara district are still left a few specimens of the cabbage-tree palm, the leaves of which are used for making the kind of hat almost universally worn by the colonists of all classes. The slender stems of this tree rise to sixty or eighty, sometimes even a hundred, feet in height, swaying gracefully to the wind as it whistles through the round tuft of foliage at their top.

There are not fewer than a hundred species of the eucalyptus, or *gum-tree*, as it is familiarly called; and a still greater number of the acacia tribe—the *wattle* of the colonists. Indeed, these two orders form everywhere the great characteristics of Australian vegetation, and impart one of its most striking features to the prevailing character of the scenery. Many of the gum-trees are of vast pro-

portions, rising from 150 to upwards of 200 feet in height. Their foliage, though called evergreen, is really of somewhat dull and leaden hue, and imparts in general a sombre character to the landscape. Early in the morning, when the dew is yet on the leaf, a peculiar (and not unpleasing) odour, which bears some faint resemblance to that of camphor, arises from the gum-forest. From one species of the tribe a sweet-tasting substance like *manna* (and so called by the colonists) is produced: it is found lying on the ground in the early morning, as well as adhering to the leaves and branches of the trees, presenting an appearance not unlike that of hoar-frost; but the heat of the sun soon causes it to dissolve. Intermixed with the immense gum-trees are the tall and cypress-like casuarinas, with numerous cedars, and a vast number of plants of a smaller growth which fill up the interstices of the forest, or attach themselves as parasites to the larger trees. Of the casuarina thirteen different species are known; and there are numerous *proteaceæ*, *orchidaceæ*, and other plants which here form some of the rarer ornaments of our green-houses.

Several of the gum-trees afford valuable timber, and are extensively used for building purposes. That called the stringy bark—from the old bark peeling off annually, and hanging in loose flakes and stripes about the tree—is one of the most generally useful, on account of its easy splitting. The red and white gums are also used for building and for making furniture, and, though rather heavy, they are well adapted for ship-building. The acacia, or wattle, is, however, most generally used in the construction of the rude dwellings of the settlers in the interior, as well as for a variety of domestic purposes.

The cedar of Australia affords a valuable and highly ornamental wood, beautiful in colour as Spanish mahogany, though inferior in solidity and closeness of grain. It is extensively used for the purposes of household furniture; indeed almost universally so. The interior fittings of churches, and of buildings of almost every description, are formed of the same beautiful wood. In the Illawara district (to the south of Sydney), where it was formerly plentiful, the cedar is for the most part cut down; but it is still abundant near Sydney, and also in the more northern parts of the colony, about Moreton Bay.

With a few trifling and unimportant exceptions, there are no native food-plants in Australia—none that could be useful to any material extent as a means of supporting life. Among the indigenous roots there are some that are occasionally used as food by the aborigines,—as the *mernong*, a kind of native parsnip, which grows abundantly in the neighbourhood of Port Phillip. To these are to be added a few berries, and one or two insipid and nearly tasteless fruits. One of the most common amongst the latter is the *geebung* (or *jibbong*), a kind of plum, which is much relished by the juvenile population of Sydney; and another is a fruit called “the five corners,” which is produced by a beautiful species of fuchsia after the fall of the blossom. In the latter, there is at the bottom of each calyx a single drop of the richest honey-water. The native cherry is destitute both of taste and flavour, and has the stone adhering to the outside. There is a tree which produces a fruit resembling, in appearance, a large pear, refreshing and tempting enough to the look; but it is really only a hard and wooden substance, the outer husk of a pendulous

seed-pod. Many of the native shrubs and wild flowers are very beautiful; like the trees, they are all evergreens, and nearly all scentless. Amongst the most remarkable is the *doryanthes*, or spear-flower, commonly called the gigantic lily by the colonists, which is one of the most splendid productions of the botanical kingdom. This magnificent flower shoots up a single upright stem, about an inch and a half in diameter, from a tuft of blady and acuminate leaves, to the height of from six to twelve feet, all at once expanding at its highest point into a bunch of beautiful blood-red flowers considerably larger than a man's hand. It is seen growing numerously upon the rugged mountainsides, at an elevation of several hundred feet, springing from the crevices of the rock, in situations where it forms a striking contrast to the sterile aspect of surrounding nature.*

The native grasses are abundant, and are spread over boundless tracts of the interior. But the grass of the Australian plains does not form a connected turf, like that of an English meadow; it grows in separate tufts, with a reddish calcareous earth in some places, and a black and sun-cracked soil in others, between the interstices. Hence the pasture-grounds of Australia are only capable, in their natural state, of affording nourishment to a limited amount of animal life in comparison with their vast extent; a space of not less than from three to five acres being required for the feed of a single sheep. Owing to this, the sheep and cattle-runs of the great squatters, with their immense flocks and herds, of necessity embrace vast tracts of country, and

* Lang, "Historical Account of New South Wales."

are continually spreading farther and farther into the interior.

Ferns grow to an enormous size, especially on moist land, and in the neighbourhood of the rivers there are huge reeds, from fifteen to thirty feet in height, forming a barrier through which it is impossible to pass. There is also a gigantic stinging-nettle (*Urtica gigas*), forty feet in height, and with a stem of nine or ten feet in girth,—sometimes even of much larger bulk; the sting of this is said to be so painful as to paralyse the limb for a time.

But if Australian botany be distinguished rather by the novelty—and, in many cases, the beauty—of its forms than by their utility to man, it is owing to no deficiency in the soil or climate of the southern continent. All the food-plants of Europe, as well as many of those native to other regions, are cultivated with the greatest success: and the fruits of southern Europe, with those proper to the warmer latitudes in general, are found to flourish wherever they have hitherto been tried. There seems, indeed, to be scarcely any limit to the adaptability of the Australian soil to the growth of nearly all the more valuable productions of foreign lands. The cotton-plant succeeds on parts of the eastern coast, tobacco is cultivated successfully in all the Australian colonies, and indigo is found to grow in particular localities. The tea-plant has been tried, with every promise of success, in parts of New South Wales. The vine flourishes in the greatest luxuriance, together with numerous other fruits, including the fig, orange, mulberry, peach, *et hoc omne genus*.

It is justly remarked by Strzelecki, that the climatic condition of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land is

represented in the most favourable light by its rich and vigorous *flora*, and by the healthy condition of its aborigines and indigenous animals. "Looking, indeed, at the singular and distinctive features by which its organic life is characterised, making this continent, as it were, a world apart, we cannot but wonder that the same climate under which that life appears should be likewise so well adapted to the maintenance of the vegetation and the animals of other hemispheres. The effect produced by the appearance of the plantain growing in company with the vine, apple, peach, and the English oak, which is the case at Tahlee, the head station of the Australian Agricultural Company, and these again flourishing in the close vicinity of the *eucalyptæ* and *mimosæ*, is indeed surprising; nor is it less surprising to behold the kangaroo, sheep, emu, and the horned cattle roaming together in the same forest, and seeking sustenance from the same herbage."

The largest amongst the native animals of Australia is the *kangaroo*, which belongs to the marsupial order of quadrupeds; and more than two thirds of its mammalia are embraced in this division of the animal kingdom. Three of the great orders of mammiferous animals are altogether unrepresented in the zoology of Australia; namely, the quadrumana, the pachydermata, and the ruminating quadrupeds. That is to say, this continent has none of the monkey tribe native to it (unless, indeed, they be of the biped variety); nor any of the thick-skinned animals, as the elephant, rhinoceros, horse, &c.; nor any oxen, deer, sheep, or similar animals.

Among the marsupials, the kangaroo takes the first rank. Thanks to our zoological collections, the form and peculiar

properties of this animal are pretty extensively known, even to those who have never travelled beyond the immediate precincts of the metropolis. The flesh of the kangaroo forms very good eating, and it is hunted for the purpose by the natives, as well as by the colonists for the sake of the sport. Although moving only by a succession of springs, or jumps, by means of its hind legs, the kangaroo attains great speed, especially when going down hill, and frequently maintains the chase successfully for some time, putting both dogs and horses to their fullest efforts of agility. They bound at an amazing rate over gullies and down declivities, passing entirely over the tops of the lower brush-wood. Few dogs will attack a large kangaroo singly, and it is sometimes even dangerous for a man to approach one when at bay, the long sharp claw which the animal bears on its hind leg constituting a powerful weapon of defence. The tail of the kangaroo is accounted its choicest portion, and its taste is said to bear much resemblance to that of venison. But this animal is becoming scarce, and has already disappeared from the neighbourhood of Sydney and the other towns.

There are numerous varieties of the kangaroo tribe, including the forest kangaroo, the red kangaroo, the wallabi, the kangaroo-rat, and many others. The wallabi is comparatively small in size; it makes an excellent soup, much relished by the epicures of Sydney. The kangaroo-rat is not larger than an ordinary rabbit; it lodges in hollow trees, hopping along like the other kangaroos with great speed, and also affording good sport in the chase.

The opossums are very numerous, and of many varieties, they all feed upon the leaves of the gum-tree, and conceal

themselves in its hollows, or amongst the branches. Among them is the grey-tailed opossum, which swings itself from branch to branch, twisting its tail round one of them as a support; and there are white flying opossums, with a web like a bat's wing stretched between their fore and hind feet; to answer the purpose of wings in springing from tree to tree. The *flying squirrels* are of a beautiful slate colour, with an exceedingly fine and delicate fur. The *bandicoot* is an animal about four times as large as an ordinary rat, but without any tail; it burrows in the ground, or in hollow trees. The opossums and squirrels are good eating; and the bandicoot is said to have somewhat the flavour of a sucking-pig, making a delicious dish with a well-prepared pudding in its belly.

There is a native *sloth*—a kind of bear, about the size of a poodle dog, with shaggy, dirty-coloured fur. It climbs trees with facility, and feeds on their leaves, getting very fat and unwieldy: the flesh is esteemed by the natives. The porcupine, or Australian hedgehog (of which there are two species), serves for another native dish; as well as the *wombat*—a kind of animal something between the bear and the sloth, which burrows in the ground, feeding on grass and roots, and getting very fat.

One of Captain Cook's sailors, who had gone a short distance into the forests of the Australian coast, came back to his companions in great terror, telling them that he had certainly seen the devil, though his alarm had prevented him from making any further observations on "the prince of darkness" than that he had horns, and was about as big as a one-gallon keg! The creature which had—and not unnaturally—occasioned so much affright to the honest

tar was doubtless a huge bat, of horribly ugly appearance, and commonly distinguished by the colonists of New South Wales as "the flying fox."

Among smaller animals of this continent are the native cat, besides several rats and mice, jerboas, ant-eaters, and a few others. But the most remarkable production of Australian zoology is the *ornithorhynchus*, or *platypus* — a curious semi-aquatic creature, which has the body of an otter, with a bill like that of a duck, and lays eggs. So perfectly anomalous in appearance is this animal that its existence was long doubted, and, when a stuffed specimen was brought to this country, it was at first regarded by a learned zoologist to whom it was shown as an attempt to impose on his credulity. The platypus frequents the margins of creeks and rivers, rising above the surface of the water for the purpose of breathing, but it is only seen with difficulty, from the extreme shyness of its habits. The natives spear and trap them, and they may be easily shot when they rise bubbling to the surface of the stream. The fur of the platypus is soft, and prettily shaded from black to silver-grey. This singular creature, which is equally fitted by its organisation for living in the elements proper to two distinct classes of animals, approximates in some respects to the reptile genus, and has been found by naturalists to bear a partial analogy to the extinct race of *ichthyosauri*.

Australia has few beasts of prey, and none of large size. The most formidable is the native dog, or dingo, which commits serious ravages upon the flocks of the settlers. This animal closely resembles the Chinese dog in form and appearance, being either of a reddish or dark grey colour,

with shaggy hair, long and bushy tail, prick ears, large head, and slightly tapering nose—in look and size not unlike a Scotch collie. The bark of the dingo is wholly different from that of a domesticated dog, and rather resembles a howl; but the statement often made that this animal does not bark, appears to be erroneous. Two or more of them frequently pursue their prey in company. On breaking in amongst a flock of sheep the dingo occasions fearful havoc, biting a piece out of every one that he can seize, until sometimes as many as twenty or thirty have fallen victims to his ferocity. The colonists hunt the dingo, besides adopting other means for the destruction of so formidable a foe, and he has been altogether extirpated from the island of Van Diemen's Land.

As a general rule, the scarcity of animal life in Australia is very great—more so than in any country on the face of the globe, unless it be the neighbouring islands of New Zealand. The whole number of native Australian species includes scarcely more than a twentieth part of the total list of known mammalia, and the paucity of individuals is quite as remarkable as the limited number of species. In the interior, the traveller may frequently pass over many hundred miles of country without meeting with a single quadruped, and almost without finding the traces of a single land animal.

But this scanty distribution of animal life is in rapid process of remedy, and that in the most useful manner, by the agency of the white settler. All the domestic quadrupeds of Europe have been successfully introduced into Australia, and horses, oxen, sheep—all utterly unknown to this southern continent until near the close of last century

—are now reared in immense numbers on its fertile and wide-spread pasture grounds. Both the ox and the horse have here (as in America) passed into a wild state, by means of a few individuals who have accidentally strayed from the herds of the settlers. Considerable herds of wild oxen are now met with in the interior: on one occasion Sir Thomas Mitchell found himself surrounded by a herd of at least eight hundred. The sheep sometimes stray beyond the limits of the pastures; but their formidable foe, the dingo, will probably prevent their passing into a state of nature—at least, in any considerable numbers. Goats and pigs are also numerously reared by the settlers.

Some attempts have been made—though hitherto without any important result—to introduce the camel into Australia; and the peculiar habits of that animal would certainly seem to render it well adapted for traversing the arid wastes found in some parts of the interior. There are at present a few camels in the neighbourhood of Port Phillip.

Among the native birds of Australia, the most numerous are those of the parrot tribe, comprising parroquets, cockatoos, lories, and many others, most of them distinguished by the most beautiful plumage. There are both black and white cockatoos—two species of the former. The yellow-crested white cockatoo is very numerous, and is a great pest to the farmer, ripping up the ripe cobs of maize with his strong hooked beak, and destroying much more than he eats. Sitting perched up on the tops of the highest gum-trees, so as to be almost out of reach of gunshot, these birds keep up a succession of screams, intended to warn one another of the approach of danger. Many

of the parrots are extremely beautiful; some of them are numerously caught in traps at seed-time, and are frequently sold in the market, to be used as food. The parroquets fly through the woods in chirping flocks, alternately creeping up the branches of the stately gum-tree, or fluttering from bough to bough with their bright and glossy plumage glittering in the sun in every variety of hue.

The family of honey-suckers (*melliphagidæ*), which here takes the place of the humming-birds of America, is also numerous; all of these have the tongue terminating in a brush-like bundle of very slender filaments, with which they suck the nectar of flowers. Upon the northern coasts are found the beautiful birds of paradise, of similar species to those of the neighbouring East Indian archipelago.

Of rapacious birds, there are eagles, falcons, and hawks, besides several owls. The eagles are formidable birds, and a couple of them will sometimes attack a kangaroo with success. The ordinary song-birds are almost entirely absent: there are, indeed, some among the native birds to which the names of the thrush, lark, and other well-known warblers, are given; but, in so far as melody is concerned, they are poor representatives of their European namesakes. The most extraordinary of all is a large species of woodpecker (*Dacelo gigantea*), to which the colonists give the not inappropriate name of the *laughing jackass*! This bird is of black and grey colour, with little or no tail, and a head and beak enormously disproportioned to the size of the body — altogether a curiously ugly and strange-looking fellow. But his chaunt — frequently kept up for a lengthened period in succession — is the most laughter-provoking of sounds. It is, indeed, impossible to hear with a grave

face the jocularities of this feathered jester. "He commences by a low cackling sound, gradually growing louder, like that of a hen in a fuss. Then suddenly changing his note, he so closely imitates Punch's penny trumpet, that you would almost swear it was, indeed, the jolly 'roo-too-too' of that public favourite you heard. Next comes the prolonged bray of an ass, done to the life, followed by an articulate exclamation, apparently addressed to the listener, sounding very like, 'Oh! what a Guy!' and the whole winds up with a suppressed chuckle, ending in an uproarious burst of laughter, which is joined in by a dozen others hitherto sitting silent."* The strangest and most provoking part of the matter is, that the hearer can scarcely avoid interpreting these jocularities in a personal sense, and feels—spite of reasoning—as though he were being intentionally quizzed by this feathered humourist.

The largest among the feathered tribes of Australia is the emu, or cassowary,—a bird of the ostrich kind, though of somewhat inferior size to the African ostrich. The emu is found chiefly in the southern part of the Australian continent, but is yearly becoming scarcer, and will doubtless be in course of time altogether extirpated by the advance of the settlers. This bird often stands nearly as high as a man, varying from five to seven feet, and is of a dark grey colour; it has no wings (or only miniature resemblances of them), and is covered with a substance which is neither hair nor feathers, but something between both. It runs with great fleetness, easily outstripping a swift horse; and is hunted with dogs by the settlers, in the same way as the kangaroo. The hind

* Col. Mundy, "Our Antipodes."

quarters of the emu somewhat resemble beef, both in appearance and taste; but the flesh of this bird is rarely eaten by the whites, though the natives are very fond of it. The eggs, which are of large size, thirteen inches long, are good and nutritious. When several of these majestic birds are seen from a distance, striding across the plain, they look at first view like a party of the native savages.

Another fine specimen of Australian ornithology is the native bustard, a bird of large size — sometimes weighing from 150 to 200 lbs. Like the emu, this bird lives chiefly in the open plains bordering on the forests, and is very shy of approach. The bustard forms a tempting object to the colonial sportsman, and — though a powerful bird, and swift of flight — is occasionally brought down by his gun. The bustard and the brush-turkey are the only gallinaceous birds native to the Australian continent; but the various kinds of domestic poultry which belong to other regions have all been introduced, and are numerous reared. There are black swans, with wild geese and ducks in great variety; the comparative frequency of the former — a majestic bird, of beautiful plumage, which is seen sailing in solitary majesty upon the sheltered bosom of some retired creek, or salt-water lagoon, near the sea-beach — falsifying in some measure the well-known “*rara avis*” of the poet.

Snakes, and other reptiles, are numerous in many parts of Australia, and especially so in its warmer latitudes. The black snake — generally about four feet in length — is the one most frequently met with; there are also the brown snake, the diamond and ringed snakes, the hazel snake, the whip snake, and many others. Some of them

are venomous, but it very rarely happens that the settlers are bitten by them. In truth, like all the members of the snake tribe, they naturally fly the face of man, and it is only when accidentally trodden on, or otherwise molested, that they become dangerous. About Sydney and the other towns, and in the more southern parts of the Australian continent, these obnoxious reptiles are comparatively scarce; but in the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay they are very numerous. The diamond snake, which is sometimes fourteen feet long, is commonly eaten by the natives. The black snake is also a common article of food with the natives, and is likewise sometimes eaten by the whites. Mr. Mackenzie tells us that when prepared by half broiling on the fire, it is "as white as an eel, and as tender as a chicken!" There is also the deaf adder—a disgusting and dangerous creature, of most repulsive appearance, short and puffy in form. Lizards are numerous in every part of Australia, and may be seen crawling up the sides of houses, and basking in the sun; they are quite harmless, and afford a ready meal for the hawks and other birds of prey. Some of the guanas—the larger members of the lizard family—occasionally exceed four feet in length, and are of a dirty brown colour. The guanas and lizards all become torpid during the winter; while in this state they are picked up by the natives, and eaten by them in a half-roasted state—their flesh being accounted a great dainty. The frogs are numerous, and often intrude into the settler's dwelling. Scorpions, centipedes, and other smaller members of the reptile tribe, are also sufficiently—and more than sufficiently—numerous.

But the intending settler need entertain little alarm

respecting these and similar unwelcome denizens of the Australian wilds, the enumeration of which looks so formidable. They speedily become objects of curiosity rather than alarm; and the more numerous among them are rendered less obnoxious by familiar experience. Cunningham mentions the case of a man well known in the colony, at the time of his residence there, by the appellation of the "snake man," who had become so familiar with these reptiles as to have acquired an absolute fondness for them, seldom travelling without some of them (and those of the venomous kind) coiled in his bare bosom, or stuffed into the crown of his hat! While in the service of a clergyman resident at Paramatta, this serpent-lover came home one day with the tail of a good-sized snake hanging out from under his hat, curling over his brow like a love-lock; and, when told of it by the lady of the house, he very coolly gave the tail a sharp pinch between his finger and thumb, to make the animal draw its stray member in. He had some constantly crawling about his bed-room, and even occupying a portion of his bed! Few persons will probably be found to imitate the coolness of this gentleman in his choice of companionship; but, after all, habit goes a long way, and people become "used to" snakes as well as to other things. And, moreover, when met with, they are readily destroyed by the aid of a good stick,—or by several other means. One of these, practised by those who (like our snake-loving friend above referred to) can overcome the natural repugnance at touching such reptiles, is to seize the snake by the tail, and, raising it thus from the ground, give it a sudden and sharp jerk, by which action the joints of its vertebral column become immediately dis-

located, and it falls to the ground incapable of further motion.

A much more really serious annoyance is occasioned by the insect-life which is so prolific in Australia, as in all warm countries. The mosquitoes and flies constitute, during six months of the year, an intolerable nuisance. These detestable items of entomology are a perfect torment to the settler—leaving him no peace either by day or night, the mosquitoes ruthlessly exacting their tribute of blood from beneath his irritated and tortured skin. Fortunately, it is chiefly to new comers that the bite of the musquito is so annoying,—rarely producing swelling, or other unpleasant effects, on those who have become, by long residence, habituated to it. Then there are “lion ants,”—ugly, venomous, black creatures, the sting of which is as severe as that of a wasp; wood-ticks, that burrow under the skin; and similar abominations.

On the northern coasts of Australia, in the neighbourhood of Cape York, there are ant-hills of enormous size—sometimes twelve feet in height. The ants which inhabit them are of a pale-brown colour, and a quarter of an inch in length. But this is far beyond the limits of the colonised portions of Australia. The common flies are a more general nuisance, settling so thickly and pertinaciously on every article of food, as to make it almost impossible to avoid swallowing numbers of them during the progress of a meal. There are native bees, in shape like the European bee, but of smaller size, and stingless. They live in hollow trees, and produce fine honey and wax, which is much sought after by the natives. The domestic bee has been introduced, with full success.

The seas, rivers, and lakes, of Australia abound in fish, almost all of distinct species from those familiar to the northern hemisphere, though many of them are called by the same names. Cod are abundant on the coasts, and are often of large size; and there is a kind of fresh-water cod, found in the interior rivers, which is extensively consumed by the colonists. A large species of perch abounds in the coast rivers of New South Wales, and is also frequently applied to the purposes of the dinner-table. Eels, of large size, are abundant. There are fresh-water shrimps and muscles in great numbers, in the rivers and ponds. The rocks around Port Jackson, as well as on numerous other parts of the coast, abound with delicious oysters, which are equally enjoyed by our brethren in the southern hemisphere as are the "natives" of the Kentish and Essex coasts by ourselves. The gathering them from the cliffs of their magnificent and picturesque harbour forms a frequent occupation for the pleasure-seeking citizens of Sydney.

CHAP. VIII.

The Aborigines of Australia.—Their Appearance.—Habits.—Food.—Native Weapons.—Corobbery, or Native Dance.—Superstitions of the Natives.—Their Treatment by the Whites.

THE aboriginal inhabitants of Australia—that is, the "black fellows," as they are termed by the colonists (an expression which, by the way, they imitate in speaking of their fairer-skinned neighbours, whom they always distinguish as "white fellows")—belong to that division of the

human family which is called the Papuan, or Austral-negro race. They are regarded by ethnologists as constituting a branch of the proper negro family, though decidedly inferior to the African negro in both physical and mental attributes.

The native man of Australia is of a dark, sooty-brown complexion, the colour of the skin varying in particular localities from a colour like that of chocolate to a deep earthy black; with long black hair, and a stature rather below that of the European. The height of the males generally ranges between four and a half and five and a half feet; the head is small, the trunk slender, the breast commonly arched and well-developed, the arms and legs of a rounded and muscular form, the foot flat, and the heel somewhat protruding. The hair is generally black, rough, lank, and coarse; though with some tribes it is soft and curling, and with others approaches to a woolly texture, like that of the negro. The facial angle is ordinarily between 75° and 85° ; the forehead low; the eyes large, far apart, and half covered by the upper lid, the iris being invariably of a deep brown, the pupil large and of a jet black; the nose broad and flat, with wide-spread nostrils; the cheeks hollow; the mouth wide, with thick lips and large white teeth, the lower jaw being unusually short and widely expanded anteriorly.*

Measured by an European standard of taste, the aborigines of Australia constitute, on the whole, a very ugly race — perhaps more unprepossessing in appearance than almost any other branch of the human family. Yet there are not a few exceptions to be taken to this judgment, in

* Strzelecki.

so far as some of the tribes are concerned, and especially in relation to those who have remained most free from the deteriorative influence of intercourse with the whites. The limbs of a well-formed Australian exhibit considerable symmetry, and a well-defined muscular development; his agility and flexibility of body, when running or otherwise actively engaged, are advantageously displayed; and when beheld in the posture of striking, or throwing his spear, his attitude leaves nothing to be desired in point of manly grace.

The native people of this continent are, however, almost universally sunk in the lowest and most degraded condition of barbarism, and—though by no means devoid of intelligence—they have never made any effort to raise themselves above the rudest condition of natural life.

In a few cases the natives are found clothed with opossum skins, or with coarse matting, and construct temporary huts of the branches and leaves of trees; but in general they are entirely destitute of clothing. Those in the neighbourhood of the white settlements are now, however, compelled to wear a blanket, these articles being distributed amongst them at certain seasons by an agent of the colonial government. They have nowhere any fixed habitations, but wander along the coasts—or, in the interior, along the creeks and rivers—in search of food; each tribe, however, confining its range within certain limits, and never transgressing—unless compelled by unusual circumstances—the bounds between itself and the neighbouring tribes.

The food of the native Australian is frequently—to our senses, at any rate,—of the most disgusting description:

they eat ravenously almost anything that comes in their way, including grubs, worms, snakes, lizards, as well as the entrails of animals that have been killed by the European, or, indeed, any kind of refuse. In particular, there is a large kind of white worm or maggot—about the length and thickness of the little finger, and somewhat resembling marrow in appearance, as well as, it is said, in taste—which they grub up from among the roots and under the bark of trees, and swallow with all the relish of the professed epicure. This delicacy forms a never-failing article of native food, and is even occasionally eaten by the whites as well as the blacks. When attainable, the kangaroo, the opossum, and various birds, also form a portion of their diet; together with, among the tribes dwelling on the sea-coast, the turtle, and the numerous small shell-fish that abound in the salt-water creeks. In fact, the extreme scantiness amongst the natural productions of Australia of articles fit for the food of man, has compelled the natives to avail themselves of whatever might serve the means of subsistence, and makes it requisite for even a few individuals to wander over large spaces in its search. There are, as we have seen, no native fruits or grain, and but little even of animal life—circumstances which alone must always have kept down the number of the native population, as well as prevented their advance from a condition of the merest barbarism, in which the bare supply of animal wants constitutes the sole object of life.

The native Australian is a savage in the worst sense of the term;—alike cruel and treacherous, he loses no occasion of wreaking his vengeance on an enemy, and indulges in the most bloodthirsty propensities. The practice of

cannibalism is general among the natives : for a long time this was doubted, but it has been proved, beyond the reach of question, and the practice often found accompanied by the most revolting ferocity—as the sacrifice of an infant by its own mother for the mere pleasure of eating its flesh ! The different tribes are always on hostile terms with one another, and any wanderer from his fellows is sure of meeting with death if he falls in with any party of natives. Their superstitions aid in the maintenance of this condition of hostility, since they believe that death never proceeds from natural causes, but always has its origin in some practice of witchcraft or sorcery on the part of an enemy, whose discovery they eagerly seek for the purpose of revenge. In some cases, the direction which the worms that first issue from the corrupting and putrefying corpse are observed to take is held to be that in which the guilty person will be found, and the first native who is met with in the search has his life sacrificed by the relatives of the deceased. This again engenders a desire for retaliation, and thus a perpetual condition of warfare is maintained between the individuals of different tribes, the tendency of which is of course to keep down the numbers of each. The cruel treatment to which the women are subjected—they being regarded merely as the slaves of the stronger sex, to be used for the purpose of carrying burdens and performing all requisite labours of whatever kind, and to be rewarded only with blows, often consummated by having their brains beaten out with the native clubs, or *waddies*—together with the not uncommon practice of infanticide, also assist in preventing the increase of the native population.

The Australian savage dwells, for the most part, amidst the shelter of his native forests, or in natural caves and hollows. Migration, the chase, fishing, and occasional war—alternated by feasting and lounging in the spots best adapted to repose—fill up the larger portion of his time. Occasionally the natives construct huts or sheds, of the slightest material, and merely for use as a temporary shelter against inclement weather. These are formed simply by two pieces of wood placed crosswise at either extremity of the intended resting-place, connected by a horizontal pole along the top; the side to windward is then covered with sheets of bark, stripped off the neighbouring trees for the purpose. On the open side of this place of shelter a fire is lighted, the materials for it being supplied abundantly by the brushwood and other vegetation around. When its temporary purpose has been served, the hut is deserted—nor can the natives be made to comprehend any use in houses otherwise than as supplying the means of such occasional shelter.

The canoes of the aborigines are only sheets of bark crimped up at the ends, as one might crimp up a child's paper boat, and are so frail as to be untenable by any but themselves. They are, however, good swimmers and divers, and often show great dexterity in their fishing operations. But it is in the construction and use of their weapons of warfare that their chief ingenuity is exhibited. Of these, the club and the spear—the latter of which is thrown with great force and dexterity—are among the most formidable. Sometimes their spears are pointed with jagged pieces of bone, so that the wound which they inflict becomes very serious.

Another of the native weapons is that called the *boomerang*, a piece of curved hard wood, nearly in the form of a parabola; it is from thirty to forty inches long, about three inches broad, and pointed at both ends. The inner or concave part is about a quarter of an inch in thickness, and the outer or convex edge quite sharp. The mode of using the boomerang is as singular as its form: its motion is altogether a puzzle, and the law of its action baffles the comprehension of the philosopher. Ask a black to throw it so that it may fall at his feet, and away goes the boomerang to forty yards before him, skimming along the surface at three or four feet from the ground, when it will suddenly rise into the air for fifty or sixty feet, describing a curve, and finally drop at the feet of the thrower. During its course it revolves with great rapidity, as on a pivot, with a whizzing sound. That so barbarous a people should have invented a weapon of this description, which seems to set all the ordinary laws of projection at defiance, is truly remarkable, and constitutes no slight proof of their natural intelligence and aptitude. In the hands of a European, the boomerang is as dangerous to the thrower as to the object aimed at, for it may return and strike himself; but, as used by the natives, it constitutes a most formidable implement, which strikes without giving the slightest idea of where the blow proceeds from. It is employed by the natives with great effect in kangaroo-hunting, the animal being struck down by it with almost unerring certainty.

The following description of the native *corobborry*, or dance, which is always practised at night-time, and by the light of huge blazing fires, kindled in some open space in

the forest, with the deep shadow of the gigantic gum-trees around, is not unamusing. We quote it from the entertaining volumes of Col. Mundy. "In the dusky distance sat a crowd of indistinct figures, while on one side of the fire squatted a party of *ginns* (that is, native women), who, after some preparations, commenced drumming upon a skin tightly stretched over their knees, assisting the dull cadence with a monotonous song, or rather scream. This had continued a few minutes, gradually increasing in loudness and energy, when the men, uttering a wild howl, sprang upon their feet and began the dance.

"They were all naked, or nearly so, and painted from top to toe in fantastic fashion — the pattern most in vogue being an imitation of a skeleton, contrived by chalking out the position of the spine and ribs with a white pigment. Their legs were uniformly striped downwards with broad white lines.

"The first performance was a war dance, wherein a variety of complicated evolutions and savage antics were gone through, accompanied by a brandishing of clubs, spears, boomerangs, and shields. Suddenly the crowd divided into two parties, and after a chorus of deafening yells and fierce exhortations, as if for the purpose of adding to their own and each others' excitement, they rushed together in close fight.

"One division, shortly giving way, was driven from the field, and pursued into the dark wood, where roars and groans, and the sound of blows, left but little to be imagined on the score of a bloody massacre. Presently the whole corps re-appeared close to the fire, and having deployed into lines and 'proved distance' (as it is called in

sword exercise), the time of the music was changed, and a slow measure was commenced by the dancers, every step being enforced by a heavy stamp, and a noise like a paviour's grunt. As the drum waxed faster, so did the dance, until, at length, the movements were as rapid as the human frame could possibly endure. At some passages they all sprang into the air a wonderful height, and as their feet again touched the ground, with their legs wide astride, the muscles of the thighs were set a quivering in a singular manner, and the straight white lines on the limbs being thus put in oscillation, each stripe for the moment became a writhing serpent, while the air was filled with loud hissings. This particular *tour de force*, which had a singular effect in the fire-light, requires great practice. I remarked that the front-rank men only were adepts at it, and I was told that some could never acquire it — as sundry of my countrymen can never unravel with their feet the mysteries of the waltz and polka.

“The most amusing part of the ceremony was the imitation of the dingo, kangaroo, and emu. When all were springing together in emulation of a scared troop of their own marsupial brutes, nothing could be more laughable, nor a more ingenious piece of mimicry. As usual in savage dances, the time was kept with an accuracy never at fault.”

The natives of Australia do not appear to entertain any distinct conception of the existence of a supreme and creative being: at any rate they manifest no such idea in their rude forms of worship. They believe, however, in good and evil spirits, and fear to wander in the dark, or even to be left alone after nightfall, lest harm should come

to them from the latter. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls—common, it would seem, to the natives throughout the Australian continent—is also a curious article of belief. They fancy that the black man, after death, reappears on the earth in the form of a white. Accordingly, when first they saw the whites, they supposed them to be the ghosts of their own dead, come back from some distant country beyond the sea. In some of the cases, of which not a few have occurred, of escaped convicts living for a lengthened period amongst the natives, any fancied resemblance which could be traced in the features of the white man to those of some deceased native has led to his being regarded as the representative of the deceased, and caused him to be looked on by the surviving members of the black family as their father, or brother, or son, as the case might be, who had returned to them in another form. In such a case, he has nothing to fear from any of the other members of the tribe. But sometimes, if not owned by any of the tribe as the ghost of a departed relative, they will kill any white man who may be in their power, for the purpose of feasting on his flesh (amiable propensity!), though we are told that in this case they do not skin him, as they suppose him to have been already skinned on some former occasion, when eaten as a black. One instance is related of a man (an escaped convict) who had lived for ten years amongst the natives, and who had learnt to speak four of their different languages; he had been in the habit of taking part in the native fights, but could not be persuaded by them to turn cannibal. When first seen by his fellow-countrymen, however, he was perfectly naked, with his spear in his hand, and looked as much a savage as those

with whom he consorted. Another case is known of an escaped convict who had lived for a period of thirty-three years amongst the natives, in the neighbourhood of Port Phillip, and who with difficulty recalled the meaning of his own language, when first addressed in it after this long lapse of time. Many instances of a similar kind might be referred to. The "*facilis descensus Avern*" of the classic poet embodies a truth of universal application: man retrogrades from the civilised to the savage state with much greater facility, and at a much faster rate, than he advances from a condition of nature towards one of artificial refinement.

Before their knowledge of the whites, the natives appear to have believed that they became changed after death into some animal, as a shark, a bird, a kangaroo or other quadruped. Now, however, they confidently look forward to returning to earth in the state of white men. A native who was executed at Melbourne a short time since consoled himself by saying, "Never mind, I jump up white fellow,—plenty of sixpence."

Circumcision is a general practice among the natives, and is regarded as a religious rite. Among many strange customs, one of the most extraordinary is that of knocking out either one or two of the front teeth of all the males, on their arrival at the age of puberty; until this ceremony has been performed, they are not admitted among the warriors of the tribe. Girls are usually deprived of the first joint of the little finger. Several of the native superstitions are in the highest degree curious; a vague and mystic adoration of the serpent, that universal symbol of spiritual power, plays an important part in their rude mythology. They

believe in the existence of an immense serpent, invisible to mortal eyes, but resident in high and rocky mountains, and with the worship of which mysterious rites are connected.*

In some parts of Australia there are found carvings on the surface of the rocks, in which human figures, animals, birds, fish, human feet, boomerangs and other weapons, are rudely represented. In caves on the eastern coast are seen representations of the human hand—formed by the fingers being widely extended, and the intervening spaces on the rock painted red—or, in some cases, white. Some strange and mysterious belief is associated with this figure of the “red hand,” and the natives are reluctant to communicate any information regarding it, except that it was made “before white fellow came.”

Chieftainship, either hereditary, or acquired by superior skill and prowess, does not appear to have any general existence as an institution among the natives of Australia, although in each community there are some members of the tribe who exercise a certain influence over their fellows. But there seem to be no recognised *great men* among them—no universal acknowledgment of any superior qualities of individual greatness, amongst either the members of the present or of a former generation—in fact, no traces of that hero-worship which is perhaps one of the necessary stages through which man must pass in his upward progress from the depths of savage life. It is, in short, difficult to find anything in the native Australian which makes it in any way likely that he would ever have risen, by his un-

* See a curious paper on “The Superstitions of the Australians,” by W. Miles; read before the Ethnological Society. — *Athenæum*, May 24. 1851.

assisted efforts, above the condition in which he was found by the European, or which affords much promise of his permanent improvement under European auspices.

Yet the aborigines of this continent are far from devoid of intelligence: they readily acquire the arts of reading and writing, and adopt, *for a time*, the usages of civilised life. Efforts have been made to induce them to adopt settled habits, and permanent stations have been erected for their use; but after a while they have always deserted these, seemingly without any immediate cause, and have returned to their native forests, and their wandering life. The experiment which has met with most success—doubtless because most in accordance with their previous habits of activity and change—has been that of enrolling a native mounted police, under English officers, to act as a border force against bush-rangers and other depredators—including their own fellow-savages. The natives employed in this way are young men, light but strong of frame, quick at drill, the use of arms, and the practice of horsemanship.

Many of the natives possess great powers of mimicry, and they readily learn to imitate the habits and peculiarities of the whites. An anecdote related by Dr. Lang amusingly illustrates this faculty, as well as the shrewd intelligence by which it is often accompanied. Walking one evening along the banks of the Paramatta river, the doctor accidentally fell in with a native called Bungary, the chief of one of the neighbouring tribes, who was pulling down the river in a canoe, accompanied by his two *ginns*, or wives. Entering into conversation with him, Bungary was requested to show how General Macquarie (one of the

former governors of New South Wales) made a bow: "Bungary happened to be dressed at the time in the old uniform of a military officer; and, accordingly, standing up at the stern of the boat, and taking off his cocked hat with the requisite punctilio, he made a low formal bow with all the dignity and grace of an officer of the old school." He was then asked to show how Governor Brisbane (the *then* ruler of the colony) made a bow; but Bungary very properly replied, in broken English, "'*Top, 'top; bail me do that yet* (meaning, 'don't tell me to do that yet'); '*top till nudda Gubbana come.*" In short, Bungary could exhibit the peculiar manner of every governor he had seen in the colony; but he had too much discretion—and doubtless too prudent a respect for "the powers that be"—to indulge in imitations of the reigning governor.

We have spoken chiefly of the more repulsive features of the native Australian; but it must not be supposed that he is devoid of better qualities. Many of the natives are employed in the service of the settlers, particularly in the squatting districts of the interior, where they act as shepherds and farm labourers; and, *where treated with kindness and forbearance*, they invariably prove faithful, and even valuable, servants. But the "black fellow" of Australia has little for which to thank his white brethren. He has been driven from his native grounds—prevented from following the chase of the kangaroo, and other animals on which he was accustomed to depend for food—and afterwards, when impelled by hunger to make inroads on the flocks of the settler, hunted down and shot, as though he were a beast of prey.

We read—and shudder as we read—of the cruelties

practised by the Spaniards upon the simple natives of the New World; but the treatment of the native race of Australia by our own fellow-countrymen, has been, in numerous cases, in no degree inferior in wanton barbarity—such barbarity as disgraces alike the profession of Christianity and the name of Englishman. Not a few cases have occurred in which the natives have been ruthlessly shot in cold blood by the settlers—or, still worse act of savage vengeance, intentionally poisoned (by means of arsenic, or some similar substance mixed with food which has been purposely placed in their way, or given them at a feast to which they were treacherously invited for the purpose)! What wonder that, with the memory of such acts as these, the attempts made by the whites to induce their settlement amongst them have so often failed, and that even the sincerity of such undertakings is doubted!

There are no means of forming any correct estimate of the number of the native inhabitants, but it must be very inconsiderable compared to the extent of the country. The tribes comprise, in general, but few individuals—often not more than forty or fifty, and rarely exceeding a hundred in number; and they are scattered widely over large tracts of country. There are probably nowhere more than a few thousands within the neighbourhood of either one of the white settlements, and these are fast diminishing in number. The Australian—like the Indian, and the islander of the South Seas, and at even a more rapid rate than either of those races—is fast passing away from the face of the land. Unlike the native inhabitant of the New World, he will leave no memorial behind to tell of his existence to future generations. No temples, tombs, pa-

laces, sculptured shrines, or colossal images! Nothing but the native names (pity that so few of them have been retained in the nomenclature of colonial geography) to tell that such a race of beings ever inhabited the "great southern land!" No records of native warriors and conquerors — no memorials of the past! The future history of Australia will date its commencement from the time when Britain's exiles first landed upon its shores.

CHAP. IX.

The Colonists. — Political Arrangements. — The Convict Population. — The Morale of Botany Bay. — The "Currency" of New South Wales. — Prevalent Vices of the Colony. — State of Religion and Education. — Public Amusements. — Topics of Public Interest.

THE white population of Australia consists almost exclusively of our fellow-countrymen and their descendants. There are, indeed, a few thousands of German settlers within the province of South Australia, and in Sydney and the other colonial towns there may be found among the residents a few wanderers from nearly every part of the globe, "from China to Peru." But the vast majority own the British Islands as the land of their parentage — a very considerable proportion of them being natives either of Ireland or Scotland, especially the former country. The language, dress, manners, and usages of Britain, have been transplanted to the other side of the globe, and our Australian colonies have become in the southern hemisphere — like the territories of the United States in the

western—a vast field for the development of those untiring energies which characterise the Anglo-Saxon race.

The increase in the white population of Australia has been, of late years, wonderfully rapid, and is now—under the influence of the recent gold discoveries—proceeding at an immensely accelerated rate. For the first thirty years after the establishment of the New South Wales colony the progress of the population was slow, and by far the greater number of immigrants were composed of convicts. In 1810 the entire population of the colony amounted to fewer than 8300 individuals. In 1821 they had increased to nearly 30,000, and within the ensuing twelve years to rather more than double that number,—the census taken in 1833 showing a return of 60,794 persons. At the latter period, no fewer than two fifths of the population consisted of convicts in actual bondage, and half of the remaining number were liberated convicts.

In 1841, the inhabitants of New South Wales (including the district of Port Phillip, then only a portion of the older colony) numbered 130,000, an increase of more than cent. per cent. within the preceding eight years. In March, 1851, New South Wales and Port Phillip together contained 264,000 inhabitants, the population having again doubled itself within the space of ten years. Meanwhile the proportion of the convict to the free population had—ever since the commencement of Sir Thomas Brisbane's administration in 1821, at which period free emigration on an extended scale may be said to have commenced—continued steadily to diminish; and with the cessation since 1840 of this mode of disposing of our criminals, in so far as New South Wales is concerned, the convict portion of

the population is fast becoming absorbed in the better elements of society which surround it. In 1849, out of a total population of 246,000, only 3500 were convicts under actual endurance of their sentences, although those whose terms of punishment had expired, or had otherwise obtained their freedom—the “emancipists,” as they are termed—were a much more numerous class.

Including South Australia and the Swan River Colony, the entire white population of the colonies on the Australian continent amounted, in 1851, to 336,000 persons. If we add to these the 60,000 inhabitants of the neighbouring island of Tasmania, we find a total little short of 400,000 persons (a number which is probably increased by the present time to at least half a million) of our own language and lineage—members, as it were, of our own family—settled upon the opposite side of the earth’s surface. Truly, if any language promises to become of universal distribution, it is our English mother-tongue!

The mainland of Australia contains at the present time four distinct colonies,—New South Wales, Victoria (or Port Phillip), South Australia, and Western Australia. Van Diemen’s Land, or Tasmania, to the southward of Australia, forms a fifth dependency of the British Empire in these southern regions. By an Act of Parliament passed in 1850, the Australian colonies had conferred upon them the privilege of a representative form of government, there being in each colony a legislative council, two thirds of the members of which are elected by the inhabitants and the remaining third appointed by the sovereign. Each colony is presided over by a governor (or lieutenant-governor, as he is styled in some of the provinces), who is appointed

by the Crown: the governor of New South Wales ranks as governor-general of all the British possessions in Australasia. In each province the governor and legislative council are authorised to make laws for its government, to regulate in a partial degree the expenditure of its revenue, and to fulfil some of the functions of a free legislative assembly. The local enactments may, however, if thought needful, be disallowed by the authorities at home; while the right of control over the waste lands, and the revenues arising from their sale, is reserved exclusively to the crown. Previous to 1850, the Australian provinces were in the position of Crown colonies, the administration of their affairs being entirely in the hands of the local governors, assisted only by executive councils, the members of which were for the most part of official nomination. A modified form of representation had, however, been conferred upon New South Wales in 1842.

In so far as her Australian possessions are concerned, Great Britain has certainly, therefore, made some advance (though an insufficient one) towards an avoidance of those errors which led to the loss of her provinces on the American continent, during the latter half of the last century. But the colonists are by no means satisfied with the form of constitution bestowed on them by the recent enactment, and regard with just indignation the reservation to the Crown of exclusive control over the appropriation of the land fund. They not unnaturally think that the revenue which is raised by the sale of the public lands,—derived as it mainly is from the value imparted to them by the employment of their own labour and capital—is as much their own property as the ordinary revenue, and ought to be equally

subject to their own control and appropriation. This question forms, at the present time, one of the chief political grievances of the colonists; and their feelings in regard to it have been embodied in various remonstrances and petitions addressed by the colonial legislatures to the home government. There are, besides, other points of dissatisfaction connected with the disposal of the colonial revenues, and with the appointment to offices of trust and emolument in the public departments of the colonies, in regard to which they consider that themselves are the parties best qualified to judge and to act, if the principles of self-government be not false and delusive, and the nominal concession of representative institutions no better than a mockery. In fact, the inhabitants of our Australian colonies feel that they have outgrown the period of their childhood, and ought no longer to be kept within the leading-strings of Downing Street—rightly considering themselves to be better judges of how to manage their own affairs than those who are at a distance of 14,000 miles from the scene of action can possibly be.

New South Wales continued to be used as a receptacle for convicts until the year 1840. A proposal for the re-admission of convicts (chiefly with a view to their employment in the district of Moreton Bay) was made in 1846, and the question was warmly agitated in the legislative council of the colony; but it was finally and decisively rejected, nor is it likely that the practice will ever be resumed.

The convict element has of course entered largely into the population of New South Wales, and influenced materially its moral and social condition. The truth of the

classic adage—"Cælum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt"—has been fully manifested at the antipodes, and the evidences of crime and vice have been (and still are, though in a modified degree) abundantly evident in the society of Sydney. There is, probably, no other part of the world in which so great an amount of crime has been committed within the same period of time as in New South Wales. This is sufficiently evidenced from the single fact that, in one year alone (1850) no fewer than 116 sentences of capital conviction were passed in the colony, in a population which did not exceed 250,000; and the minor offences are in fully an equal proportion.

But, however injurious, in a moral point of view, the continued practice, for so long a period, of sending thither criminal offenders of all grades may have ultimately been to the colony, there can be no doubt that New South Wales is in a great degree indebted for her prosperity to the convict system, which has always afforded a steady supply of labour—the first and principal demand in a new settlement. The various class-distinctions which have sprung out of the system—as that between the "emancipists" and the free emigrant portion of the population—will necessarily die out in course of time, as the cause to which they were originally due has ceased to operate, and in another generation will be almost entirely extinct. Already, indeed, within the last few years, a marked improvement has taken place in the moral aspect of the colony, and the tone of society is gradually assuming a healthier condition.

For a long time—indeed until within a comparatively recent period—so strongly was the idea of residence in New South Wales associated in the English mind with the

thoughts of crime and punishment, that the very mention of it frequently involved, on the part of even those whom free inclination had led thither, a liability to suspicions of by no means a pleasant description. A person may now, however, confess to a temporary sojourn in the Australian colonies, and to a personal acquaintance with the shores of "Botany Bay," without the fear of his being supposed a member of that numerous class who have "left their country for their country's good."

Neither South Australia nor Victoria have ever been used as convict settlements, and are consequently for the most part free from the moral taint which has infected the elder colony. In both provinces, however, it is found that a large proportion of the class of offenders against the law consists of criminals who have escaped thither from the penal settlements, or who have, either directly or indirectly, become subject to the contaminating influences propagated by their means. Recently, the Swan River Settlement, on the coast of Western Australia, has been used as a receptacle for convicts; its limited population, and the great deficiency in the supply of labour, having made the settlers there not unwilling to receive an addition to their numbers from such a source. Indeed, this step promises to be ultimately productive of much solid benefit to a settlement which possesses many natural advantages, but in which the want of labour has hitherto operated as the chief obstacle to success. And the great distance of the settled portion of Western Australia from either of the other colonies, with the absence of any overland communication between them—a communication in no degree likely to be supplied for a long period to come,

at any rate, the intervening country between Western and Southern Australia being of the most sterile and forbidding description — precludes the chance of any serious evil, in a moral point of view, resulting to its fellow-settlements from this circumstance. The temporary settlement formed on the northern coast of the continent, under the designation of North Australia, has been abandoned, as mentioned in a previous page; though it is not unlikely that a fresh attempt may ere long be made—the great number of vessels passing through Torres Strait, and the dangerous character of its navigation, making it a desirable object to have a permanent government establishment in that locality. The neighbourhood of Cape York, at the northern extremity of the Australian continent, will probably be selected for the purpose.

Western Australia is then at present the only portion of the Australian continent to which criminals are conveyed. But the exemption of New South Wales from this stain has been purchased at the expense of Van Diemen's Land, which has for many years past become the chief receptacle for the convicted offenders against England's laws. Van Diemen's Land is, in fact, neither more nor less than a huge gaol, more than half of its male population consisting of convicts. The free settlers there protest loudly against this, and strenuous efforts have recently been made to procure an exemption from the further influx of convicts, a great "Anti-transportation League," which includes delegates both from that island and the neighbouring colonies, having been formed for the purpose. But, after all, convict-labour appears to be by no means a drug in the market, even in that (in the opinion of the Anti-trans-

portationists) much-abused settlement, — some even of those who exclaim most loudly against the system being themselves among the ready employers of convict servants! And there is a prior question, and a very difficult one, which forces itself on the consideration of the government at home, namely, what is to be done with our criminals? If they are neither to be sent to New South Wales nor to Van Diemen's Land, — both of them founded expressly as convict settlements, and in each of which enormous sums have been laid out, at the expense of the mother country, in connection with establishments for the employment of the convict class, — where are they to go, or what is to become of them? Are they to crowd our gaols at home, or by employment on public works here to prevent the industry of the honest artisan from obtaining its due remuneration in the market of labour? The problem is one difficult of solution, and which it fortunately forms no portion of our task to attempt to solve. But it is obvious that such colonies as New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land — originally founded as convict settlements, and supported in great measure throughout by convict labour — occupy in relation to this question a very different position from South Australia or the New Zealand settlements, which were from the first undertaken by voluntary agency.

The colonial-born portion of the Australian population — that is, the white natives of the different colonies — are distinguished by the same general spareness of form, and pallidness of complexion, which characterises the people of the United States. The men are generally tall and large-boned, and — though enjoying excellent health, and a good

development of muscular power—have usually a weather-worn look, and an appearance in advance of their years. This seems to arise chiefly from the precocious development of both physical and mental powers, which is fostered alike by the climate and by the ordinary necessities of an emigrant's life. To whatever cause, however, it may be due, the ruddy hue of health which almost invariably accompanies the out-door life of our own country is seldom found in the Australian colonies amongst either sex. On the other hand, there are nowhere seen in Australia the sallow and agueish faces which the traveller meets with on the banks of the Mississippi or the Ganges. The females are frequently good-looking—indeed generally so, and are often found to possess considerable personal charms; but the early development of their beauty is invariably attended by as premature a decay. It is a pallid and languid beauty—of a kind that, after all, under the glowing sky of the south, does not wear as well as the charms that develop themselves amidst the cloudier atmosphere of our own island home. Physically—and morally too—the white race exhibits a tendency to deteriorate in the Australian climate. The same laws seem to prevail in regard to man as in reference to the lower members of the animal kingdom, and the purity of the breed requires to be maintained by frequent importations from the parent stock. With a knowledge of the fact, that, during great part of the present year, emigration from the United Kingdom to the Australian colonies has been proceeding at the rate of 5000 persons weekly, we need entertain no fear of this importation of fresh blood being abundantly supplied for a long time to come.

In New South Wales, the native-born population are distinguished as the "currency"—in opposition to the emigrant portion of the inhabitants, who are (or formerly were) considered as "sterling." These terms originated in the difference which, at one period, some of the financial arrangements of the colonial government had occasioned between the nominal value of the pound sterling, and its real worth as an article of currency—the latter being then considerably lower than its proper and standard estimate.

The "currency" of New South Wales are, however, a fine and manly race, by no means unworthy representatives of England's greatness; and, like all successful dwellers in a new country, they grow up in the practice of that greatest of moral qualifications—self-reliance. The colonial-born men are also popularly known by the name of "*Corn-stalks*"—from their frequent lank and bony appearance. With his independent and self-satisfied gait, his loose and careless dress (of which the cabbage-tree hat forms an invariable portion), his shrewd and ready intelligence, and his quick appreciation of the monetary value of things around, Brother "Corn-stalk" in not a few particulars resembles Brother Jonathan—his fellow-descendant from the same parent stock. The juvenile population of Sydney, and other towns in the Australian colonies, are also distinguished by the same precocious "smartness" which marks their congeners in the New World, and which often attracts amusingly the notice of visitors to the United States.* In Australia, this is mainly the result of the

* This precocity occasionally savours somewhat too much of Botany Bay morality, if we may trust the observation of Colonel Mundy, who

comparative scarcity of labour, and the early age at which the youthful portion of the population find their services called into requisition—at a period when, in many cases, they are still within the limits of childhood. A numerous family is the reverse of an incumbrance to the industrious settler in these distant lands. A striking contrast, this, to our own over-populated country, in which a man too often has occasion to measure his pecuniary struggles by the catalogue of names inscribed within the cover of his family bible!

The great vice of New South Wales is drunkenness—habitual excess in the use of ardent spirits characterising almost all classes, and especially the lower orders. This has been the case from the first establishment of the colony; during a large portion of its earlier existence, rum was in such general use as to constitute the chief circulating medium of the settlers, by far the larger portion of the colonial revenue being derived from its sale, and persons of every class (not excepting even those who held official situations of trust) speculating in it as a means of profit. Of late years the agency of temperance societies, and the more general diffusion of moral principles, have done something towards checking the evil; but public-houses are still amongst the most prominent features of

tells us, that there exists in the purlieus of the Australian capital a sort of juvenile school for bush-rangers,—the young idlers of the town forming themselves into gangs, and taking up positions on the roads that lead from the city into the bush. Here they waylay and rob smaller boys, or weaker parties, of their “five corners” (the native fruit mentioned in a preceding page), according to the most skilful methods of highway robbery. “Hurrah for the road!” is the motto of these promising and hopeful youngsters.

the colony. The roads in the interior are lined with them at frequent intervals, and the towns are full of them. The yearly wages of the labouring settler, the produce of his little farm and homestead, and often the land itself which he has toiled to attain the possession of, are continually dissipated in these haunts of vice and crime. "Sly grog-shops," as they are termed—that is, houses engaged in retailing spirits without a licence—are extremely numerous, and their owners are often persons possessed of both wealth and station in society—a wealth that has been acquired at the expense of every virtuous principle, and a social station that is rank with the corrupted moral atmosphere of Botany Bay!

A spirit of gambling, and general fondness for speculation, is another colonial vice, and one that is, perhaps, in some measure inherent in the establishment of new settlements in a distant land. The commercial history of the Australian colonies has been a succession of periods of extraordinary excitement,—of land-jobbing on the most extensive scale,—of exaggerated value attached to the staples of produce, with the semblance of a high state of prosperity, at one period—followed by a corresponding depression shortly after. Fortunes rapidly made, and lost as rapidly as made, fictitious prosperity, and almost universal bankruptcy. One of these great periods of colonial excitement (in New South Wales) was in the years 1826 and 1827, and another in 1841 and 1842, in both of which the value of farming stock and land reached the most extravagant pitch, and which were in both cases followed by the almost universal and utter insolvency of the settlers. This is a tendency not likely to be diminished

by the recent gold discoveries. But the remembrance of our own railway schemes of 1845 should moderate our judgment on such points.

The interests of religion and education are not neglected in the colonies. There are still, indeed, among the squatting settlements in the distant interior, places far removed from the influence of any minister of religion, and in which the sound of the Sabbath-bell is never heard. One writer on Australia, and long resident there *, tells us of a man who assured him that his only mode of reckoning time in the bush was derived from the fact of his having been for years accustomed to shave himself every Saturday evening, so that he was still able to tell which was Sunday by the length of his beard ! A mode of fixing chronology which deserves to rank — for novelty if not for depth of skill — with the zodiacs of ancient Egypt, or the astronomical circles of Chaldæa. But praiseworthy assistance is given by the colonial governments in aid of voluntary efforts on behalf of the cause of religion. When a sufficient number of persons of any community express a desire for the erection of a place of worship in their locality, as soon as one half of the sufficient funds is raised amongst themselves, the remaining moiety is immediately contributed from the colonial treasury, and a salary paid to the minister from the same source. The most numerous sects of religionists are the Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and Presbyterians, who, together, embrace the great majority of the colonial population. There are also Baptists, Independents, Methodists, and other denominations, all of

* The Rev. D. Mackenzie, "Ten Years in Australia." London, 1845.

which are recognised by the state, and have it in their power to claim assistance under such circumstances as those above referred to. The Episcopalian Church is presided over by the Bishops of Sydney and Newcastle, in the colony of New South Wales; and by the Bishops of Melbourne, Adelaide, Western Australia, and Tasmania, in the other colonies respectively.

Schools are, on the whole, numerous in the Australian colonies, very few even of the smaller towns being altogether without them. Yet there is ample room for their further extension. In New South Wales there are two highly important educational establishments of a superior class — Sydney College, supported by members of the Episcopalian denomination, and the Australian College, which represents the Presbyterian Church. There are several important educational establishments at Hobart Town, some of them of a high degree of excellence.

Of the public amusements, one of the most favourite is horse-racing, which has been encouraged by the local governments with a view towards the improvement of the breed of horses. Every town, and almost every village, has its race-course, and the gambling propensities of the colonists find ample opportunity for exercise in attendance upon them. Horses are numerous kept by all classes, and almost every one is more or less in the habit of riding — which is, indeed, rendered requisite by the long distances that frequently have to be traversed, especially in the interior districts. For some time the East India Company maintained an establishment in New South Wales for the purpose of supplying horses to the cavalry employed in their service, but this has recently been broken up.

All classes in the Australian colonies are more or less directly interested in the growth of wool, the market-price of corn, the value of stock, and similar objects. These, and subjects appertaining to them, form, accordingly, the most ordinary and the most interesting topics of conversation. Dr. Johnson remarked of some acquaintances who dwelt in the country, that "their talk was all of runts," or heifers. So it is with the good people of our southern colonies. They give themselves wonderfully little concern about the political revolutions of Europe, the threat of insurrections, the overthrow of dynasties, or the various great questions which here agitate the popular mind, unless when (as in the case of the Corn Laws) the matter at issue has an immediate bearing upon their own prosperity; but the latest quotations of corn or wool, the market prices of tallow, hides, horns, and hoofs, are topics in which they take the most vivid interest, and discuss with the greatest relish. Even these, however, have sunk into unimportance under the influence of the recent discoveries of the precious metal, and *gold* has become the absorbing topic for all classes!

CHAP. X.

Life in "the Bush." — Bush-fires. — Sheep and Cattle-farming. — The Squatters. — The Australian Shepherd. — The Stockman. — Enemies of the Squatter. — Droughts. — Boiling-down Establishments. — Increase of Flocks.

IN reading of Australia, we continually meet with the word "bush," used to indicate the open country, as distin-

guished from the towns and their immediate neighbourhood. Properly speaking, the word means the uncleared country—that is, the tracts covered either with trees or brushwood—and is derived from the Dutch word *bosch*, a wood or forest. It is, however, commonly used in the more general sense above referred to. The “bush” is to the Australian settler equally important, and equally a matter of interest, as the wilderness to the Bedouin Arab—the mountain pastures of the Alps to the Swiss or the Tyrolese peasant—or the waters of a boundless ocean to the English sailor. It is the scene of his successes or his failures—of his toils and cares,—and his daily habits and experiences derive their form and colour from its peculiar and characteristic features.

In its native state a large portion of the Australian soil is found covered with vast and seemingly interminable forests. These, however, are in general less dense than the forests of other parts of the world, the trees being only thinly scattered, and at intervals of some distance, so as to present somewhat the appearance of the park scenery of our own country. But near the banks of rivers, and on the alluvial plains within reach of their inundations, the soil is more thickly timbered, and becomes what the colonists call a thick brush, or jungle. In such cases there are seen immense gum-trees (everywhere the prevailing feature of Australian scenery) towering upwards amidst groves of the cedar and the mimosa, with innumerable wild vines and parasitical plants filling up the interstices between the foliage of more expanded growth.

In the more sterile regions, as amidst the rocky mountain tracts, or upon the sandy plains of the interior, the

forest degenerates into a miserable *scrub*, covered only with trees of stunted growth, and with a scanty brushwood of unpromising and forbidding aspect. Tracts of such a description intervene between grassy plains of immense extent, often found free from timber, and admirably suited for the purpose of natural pasture-grounds. The forest-land of Australia, even in its most densely-wooded parts, is capable of being sufficiently cleared for the cultivator with much less expenditure of labour than is required in a Canadian forest.

The aspect of the pastoral portions of New South Wales (including Port Phillip), and also of the similar tracts in Van Diemen's Land, is—according to the testimony of Count Strzelecki—altogether novel, striking, and characteristic of the Australian zone. Its mountains present nothing in common with the mountainous districts of other regions ; nor do its plains recall to the traveller's recollection either the steppes of south-eastern Europe, or the prairies, savannahs, llanos, or pampas, of the New World. The forest by which the greater portion of the country is covered has nothing in common with the forests of other lands ; it is Australian, and strictly *sui generis*. A difference in lines, tints, and shadows prevails throughout, and produces original effects in every part of the picture.

Through its whole extent the pastoral ground exhibits either the alternate fall and rise of a smooth undulating surface, sometimes running into flats,—or one broken and riven, terminating in deep gullies and steep ridges. The eucalyptus, with its everlasting olive-green foliage, and its white or grey-coloured trunk, uniformly covers the surface, and, whether boldly erect and spreading, or stunted in its

growth, yield but little shade compared with that afforded by the trees of the European or the American forest.

This character of the Australian forest prevents the vegetation of the grasses from being impeded as it would be under dissimilar circumstances. In many of those portions of the colonies which are yet untrodden by flocks and herds, the vegetation is luxuriant beyond description, and extends in undiminished vigour up to an altitude of several thousand feet above the sea.

Bush-fires — often spreading over immense tracts of country — are of frequent occurrence. Sometimes they originate accidentally, from the contents of a stockman's or shepherd's tobacco-pipe (every one smokes in the bush) thrown carelessly on the ground, and communicating the spark to the dried and withered grass, already parched with the heat of the sun, and over which the flame spreads with extraordinary rapidity. More frequently, however, the bush is intentionally fired by the settler, who finds from experience that a finer crop of grass afterwards covers, with the first occurrence of rain, the burnt and blackened soil. These bush-fires present an extraordinary spectacle — one that almost approaches, indeed, the character of the sublime — as the sheet of flame rolls, in vast volume, over miles and miles of country, destroying in its course such animal life as falls within its reach, and only stayed from further progress by the lack of material. As the conflagration spreads, birds, snakes, and quadrupeds alike hurry from the coming destruction — kangaroos, opossums, bandicoots, and emus, driven from their hiding places among the tall grass, rush forward, mingling their several noises with the screams of the birds and the hissing

of the serpents. In the interior of Australia the traveller often observes, over a wide extent of country, the blackened stems of trees, which remain for a long time upon the ground—the memorials of such occurrences.

The soil of Australia is in general poor, excepting in particular localities. There are, indeed, some tracts which rival in productiveness the most fertile lands of other countries. The districts of Hunter's River and Illawara, in New South Wales, as well as many tracts both in Port Phillip and in South Australia, are of the latter description; but they are exceptions to the general character of the land, by far the greater part of which is better suited for grazing purposes than for the use of the plough. Sheep and cattle-farming forms accordingly the chief business of the Australian settler, and the *squatters*, by whom it is pursued upon a scale of enormous extent, are the most important and influential classes of the Australian community.

The term *squatter*—one somewhat inelegant in sound, and unsuggestive of any great refinement of idea—implies in Australia a more important class than it denotes in the western states of the New World, where it appears to have had its origin. The American squatter is generally a small farmer—a man of limited means—who wanders forth beyond the settled districts towards the “far west,” and there (in a literal as well as a figurative sense) sits himself down, or “squats,” upon the uncleared and hitherto unoccupied land. He has, in most cases, no legal right to its occupancy, pays no rental, license, or fee of any kind, and gradually moves farther and farther to the westward as the increase of the population, the springing up of fresh towns, and the progress of the state surveys, render requisite. In some instances

he exercises a right of pre-emption in regard to the land which he has occupied, purchasing it of the government at the fixed price of a dollar and a quarter (equivalent to about five shillings) an acre; while in others he moves his limited establishment farther towards the west, plunging deeper and deeper into the vast wilderness. In Australia, "squatting" is essentially the same thing, but it is conducted on a scale of greater extent, and by a more influential class of individuals. The Australian squatter occupies a position in the community which receives the official recognition of the government, and holds his land on license from the Crown. The squatters are, in fact, the tenants of the Crown, and since the year 1847 have had secured to them by government a fixity of tenure on their lands. They represent, in great measure, the "landed interest" of the Australian community, and are the aristocracy (or the *squattocracy*) of the colonies.

In the original settlement of the Australian colonies, all the land was wisely held to belong to the Crown, and regarded as a trust held by the Crown for the benefit of the future settlers. Hence there have never been, in reference to these settlements, any of the interminable and unsatisfactory disputes about the titles to land which have proved so mischievous in the case of New Zealand. Treaties for the purchase of land from the natives by intending settlers have, indeed, been sometimes entered into, but they have always been disallowed by the colonial government.

In New South Wales, previous to 1830, all the land that had been alienated from the Crown had become so by gift—grants of land having been made to private individuals by the various governors of the colony. All the more re-

spectable settlers (as well as many who were by no means respectable) readily obtained such grants of land on application to the colonial authorities—with, in some cases, the condition attached of the grantee employing a certain number of convict labourers. Extensive tracts of land in the older portions of the settlement—especially in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney, and along the banks of the Hawkesbury and Hunter rivers—were thus constituted the private property of the colonists. The first land sold by the Crown was in 1831, at which period the system of grants of land was discontinued, and the price fixed at a minimum sum of 5s. per acre. In 1838, the minimum price was raised to 12s. per acre, and in 1842 to 20s.,—at which it has since remained. During a short period, 20s. per acre was constituted a *fixed* price—no competition in the way of sale being allowed; but for the greater portion of the time, as at present, the price fixed by government has been only a minimum (or up-set price), and the land has been disposed of by public auction—as much more being obtained as may result from the competition of the different bidders. The price received by government for the lands thus sold constitutes a fund for the purposes of immigration, and is transmitted to the home authorities, to be employed in sending out emigrants belonging to the labouring classes from the different portions of the United Kingdom. Of late years, however, since the upset price was raised from 12s. to its present high rate of 20s., the quantity thus disposed of has been comparatively small. About the same period as that at which the sale of Crown lands commenced, arose the practice of issuing depasturing licences, such as the squatters at present hold.

In South Australia, the land was, from the first, disposed of by sale — no free grants having ever been made in that province. The minimum price of Crown land was fixed at once at 20s. per acre, at which it has all along remained — although in the first instance, in order to raise the requisite fund for the establishment of the colony, the intending settlers were allowed to become the possessors of such portions of land as they intended to occupy at the reduced rate of 12s. per acre. In the Swan River settlement, enormous tracts of land were in the first instance granted to private individuals — tracts of much larger extent than could possibly be occupied to any profitable purpose, unless a very extensive importation of labour had been concomitantly effected.

Numerous variations have from time to time been made in the land regulations of the different Australian colonies, but for some period past they have been placed under an uniform system in this regard, and the minimum price everywhere fixed at the same figure — namely, 20s. an acre. The policy of so high a price has formed, and still forms, a much disputed question. One of its most obvious results is the disability under which it places persons of limited means — all, in fact, who are not possessed of considerable capital — from becoming owners of land. In this respect, the system contrasts disadvantageously with that pursued in the United States, where the intending settler knows that he can obtain land at the rate of 5s. an acre — and land, too, which is in general of much better quality than the greater portion of the Australian soil can boast. Into this question, however, we need not enter in the present place.

The entire quantity of land in the Australian colonies which has been alienated from the Crown — either by grant or purchase,—bears but a small proportion to the whole extent of available land within the different provinces. The “waste lands” (as the vast tracts still in the possession of the Crown are commonly termed) are the great scene of the squatter’s operations. They are divided into three classes—the settled, the intermediate, and the unsettled districts. In the settled districts, the lease is enjoyable for one year only; in the intermediate, for eight years; in the unsettled (or ultra-frontier) lands—which are those of greatest extent—for the term of fourteen years. The rent paid by the squatter to the Crown is 10*l.* per annum for a run capable of carrying four thousand sheep, or six hundred and forty head of cattle or horses. The runs are not open to purchase during the continuance of the lease, excepting by the lessee. On the expiration of a lease, government has the power of putting up all or any portion of the lands for sale, the lessee retaining, however, the right of pre-emption at its fair value, which shall in no case be estimated at less than 20*s.* per acre. In addition to the rental of his land, the squatter also pays to government an annual assessment on his stock, at the rate of 3½*d.* per head for horses, 1½*d.* for cattle, and one halfpenny for sheep. Such are the present conditions of a squatter’s licence—conditions favourable to the leaseholder, since the high upset price of his land renders him little likely to be dispossessed of it by purchasers; and, in any case, he can exercise the right of pre-emption.

In 1847, there were in the colony of New South Wales (then inclusive of Port Phillip) 180,000,000 acres occupied

on lease by the squatters; and 5,000,000 acres in the hands of individuals by purchase. This is equivalent to more than 289,000 square miles, by far the greater portion of which immense area consists of sheep-runs. In New South Wales, at a period three years later, the districts coming under the denomination of "settled" contained above 22,000,000 acres.*

The business of a squatter—to be carried on with advantage—requires the employment of at least a moderate amount of capital—perhaps from 1000*l.* to 2000*l.* even for the purpose of commencing operations. But in the province of Port Phillip, and also, to a less extent, in the other colonies, the practice of renting sheep or cattle, either with or without permanent interest in the pasture or "run," has of late become very common. A man without sufficient capital for the purchase of stock, or for undertaking the necessary expenses of a sheep-station, may thus make a good livelihood, and gain experience in the details of a squatter's life, upon advantageous terms. In such cases, the lessee agrees to pay the stock-owner so much per annum for a certain number of sheep (a thousand, or otherwise, as the case may be). He gets the wool and the increase of the flocks, and binds himself to surrender the station to the owner at the expiration of the lease, with a stock equal in number, condition, and age, to that which it contained at the time the arrangement was entered into. On the other hand, there are many sheep-owners who are neither buyers nor lessees of land, and who do not engage directly in squatting operations. Instances are

* Parliamentary Papers: Melville's "Present State of Australasia," &c. London, 1850.

frequent in which stockholders receive and graze the sheep of such persons on what is termed *halves*—that is, on half profits—the grazier receiving yearly one-half of the wool, and one-half of the increase of the flock, while the remaining moiety belongs to the owner of the sheep.

Many of the squatting stations are of immense extent—not fewer than 30,000 sheep being sometimes pastured within the limits of a single run. As the flocks increase, fresh runs have to be sought at a farther distance in the interior, and thus the scene of the squatter's operations is continually advancing farther and farther inland—in the same way that the backwoodsman of America is continually travelling onward towards the "far west." The squatter's life is almost confined to the bush; he seldom visits the towns, excepting once a year, when the wool and other produce of his flocks is conveyed, in drays drawn by bullocks, to Sydney, or other coast towns, for shipment to Europe. All the materials and equipments required for the use of the shepherds or servants in his employ are kept in store—in such quantity as will serve for the yearly consumption, since there is often no communication with any town at which they could be procured at a less distance than two or three hundred miles from the station. Many of the great flock-owners, however, reside in Sydney, and carry on their squatting operations by means of overseers, employed at their different stations.

The shepherd's life, in the Australian bush, is secluded and monotonous; but it is one that involves little labour or hardship of any kind, and is better remunerated than are numerous pursuits of much higher standing in our own over-populated country. At daybreak the shepherd

releases his flock from the enclosure in which they have passed the night, and begins to drive them slowly before him—the sheep cropping the grass as they advance. After resting for a while about mid-day, by which time they have travelled a distance of perhaps four or five miles, the flock is again turned homewards—the business of the shepherd merely consisting in watching their progress, so as to prevent them from straying, or receiving any injury, and in taking care that the flock is well spread over the ground. Besides the shepherd, there is a hut-keeper belonging to each station, a portion of whose duties consists in watching the flock during the night (when they remain within a large enclosure, or fold), to guard against the attacks of the native dog, whose destructive propensities we have already referred to.

The shepherd receives weekly rations of every kind of provisions—meat, flour, sugar, tea, &c.—from his employer, with an annual payment in money of from 15*l.* to 25*l.* or upwards, according to circumstances—as the distance from town, or the state of the labour market in general. He is well-fed—upon “damper” and grilled mutton (the universal fare of the bushman), accompanied by tea, which he makes in a tin pot always carried with him for the purpose,—and leads a life of comparative ease and listless enjoyment; amusing himself, while reposing during the mid-day heat “beneath the shade” of the huge gum-trees of the Australian forest, with the music of the Jews’ harp or the accordion—the modern representatives of the shepherd’s pipe, tuned of old amidst the classic groves of Arcady. The tendencies of man—whether towards pleasure or business—are everywhere the same,

and are reproduced in nearly a like fashion in every age, and equally under a northern or a southern sun. We are informed by a late resident (Col. Mundy) that great numbers of both these instruments of music—especially the former—are imported into Australia, and that instances are not unfrequent of a shepherd walking two hundred miles in order to become possessed of one.

The indolent and comparatively inactive life of the shepherd is regarded with something of contempt by the "stockman," or person in charge of the cattle on an Australian cattle station. His pursuit involves labour of a more stirring and active kind, and his time is almost wholly passed upon horseback—riding in the roughest manner, and often at no little risk of person, after the stray members of his herd. The cattle are distributed over the "run" in herds (or "mobs" as they are generally called in the colony) of two, three, or four hundred, each herd being kept within its particular locality by the stockman's exertions. The stockman is known by his chin-strapped hat of cabbage-tree palm, his bearded and embrowned visage, and his keen, quick, and vigilant eye. He generally wears a jacket and trowsers of the colonial-wove "tweed," the latter garment being fortified with fustian or leather between his thin and bowed legs. But the more peculiar symbol of the stockman's trade is the *stock-whip*, a formidable implement, the crack of which is heard for miles around, and is well known to the quadrupeds for whose correction it is designed, and whose hides often exhibit the evidence of its powers. The stock-whip is a thick but tapering thong of twelve or fourteen feet, which weighs, perhaps, a couple of pounds, and is attached to a

handle of a foot and a half in length. To the end of the lash is fastened the "cracker"—generally made of a twisted piece of silk handkerchief, or perhaps of a shred from an old infantry sash. The wilderness often echoes with the noise of this terrible scourge, to handle which with effect requires the strength, as well as the practised skill, of the experienced stockman.

Cattle-farming in Australia is altogether a more stirring pursuit than the management of sheep-runs, and involves the most vigorous exertion on the part of all whom it employs. Once a year (or sometimes oftener) the cattle are collected within the stock-yard for the purpose of branding—each animal having the owner's initials, or his peculiar mark, burnt in upon its hide. On these occasions a scene of wild excitement and confusion occurs—the loud reports of the stockman's whip mingling with the bellowing of the oxen in their efforts to escape being driven into the yard. To these noises are added the barking of dogs, the rearing and prancing of the excited horses, and the shouting of their riders, with the heavy tramp of several hundred head of cattle striving to break away and escape into the recesses of the forest. As the animals approach the stock-yard, a last desperate struggle is made to avoid being driven within its precincts; but both the stockman and their horses are on the alert, the formidable stock-whip is in full activity, every movement of the cattle is watched and immediately headed. At length they are safely enclosed, but not before horses and riders alike are covered with dust and perspiration from head to foot. When once branded, the mark on the animal is indelible, and on his future visits to the stock-yard he has only to remain a

spectator of the sufferings of his fellow-brutes—for the operation of branding is a cruel one, and effected in the roughest manner. A red-hot iron is placed on the body of the animal, and kept there until it has burnt completely through the hide. Horses are often branded in the colony in a similar manner, and are much injured in appearance by the process.

The requisites alike for a cattle-station or a sheep-run are grass, water, and open forest, not always to be readily obtained in this land of drought. Until they become accustomed to their new run, the cattle require to be driven within an enclosure for the night; but after a time may be left at liberty in this regard—though with the occasional risk of their loss. Wild cattle, descended from stray members of the herd, are, as we have before observed, already numerous in the distant recesses of the Australian wilderness. But the wild cattle never mix with the tame herds; nor can any ordinary treatment render them manageable. At the slightest noise—or the sight of a distant horseman—a herd of them will start off at full speed, and pursue their way into the unthreaded forest.

The universal fare of the bushman—shepherd or stockman—and of the gold-seeker also—is tea and damper, with abundance of mutton, which is broiled at the bush-fire with little regard to the ordinary appliances of the culinary art. And what is *damper*—perhaps our reader asks? It is simply unleavened bread—or flour and water, well kneaded, and baked in flat cakes amongst the ashes of a wood fire. Those accustomed to the use of this homely and primitive kind of bread soon become fond of it, and even prefer it to any other. The open tin pot in which

his tea is boiled, with coarse brown sugar, and without milk, constitutes an unfailing portion of the bushman's equipment. Log huts, roofed with bark—the walls roughly plastered with mud, which speedily becomes hardened in the sun, forming an architectural combination known in colonial phrase as “wattle and daub”—are the ordinary residence of the bushman. And the furniture in these dwellings is usually of the most rude and primitive kind—the bedstead consisting merely of four upright posts driven into the ground, with connecting pieces of timber between—and all the other articles being of an equally homely description. But if successful in his pursuits, the squatter—after wisely “roughing it,” and dispensing with all superfluities during the first few years of his experience of a bush life—in time builds himself a more substantial residence, in the adornments of which, both within and without of doors, he gradually realises the comforts, and even the luxuries, of the dweller in towns. In the far-distant interior there may occasionally be found, as the abode of the thriving squatter, a pretty and romantic-looking cottage, surrounded by wide verandas for the purpose of keeping off the intense heat of the sun's rays, with numerous climbing roses, honeysuckles, and other flowering plants (both native and exotic) thickly clustering around its supporting columns, or amongst their connecting trellis-work. Such dwelling-places—blissful retreats from the glare and heat of an Australian sun—remind the settler in a distant land of scenes endeared to him by the early associations of home, and tell pleasantly of that fondness for horticulture which is so characteristic of an Englishman's taste, and which accompanies him even to the

antipodes. And around his residence will be found the neatly-planted garden, and the well-stocked homestead, with the various detached buildings which form necessary portions of an English farm — the cow-house, the pig-stye, the poultry-yard, the barn, and other accompaniments of rural life. In fine, a man may turn squatter, and fix his dwelling-place in the bush, without becoming a savage; and, if blessed (as all settlers in a new colony should be) with a gentle helpmate to share his lot, may surround himself with the comforts of social life, and even indulge the refinements of taste and imagination, amidst the mighty and almost primeval gum-trees of an Australian forest!

Among the chief local enemies of the squatter are enumerated bush-fires, black fellows, droughts, dingoes, and the disease among his flocks. But the first named of these are, as we have already seen, by no means devoid of utility, though when caused—as they sometimes are—by the agency of the natives, they spread occasionally to a dangerous extent. The natives are, in some districts, a more serious cause of alarm, and, when a bad feeling has once sprung up between themselves and the settlers, they have often wrought severe injury on the latter. A slight (and perhaps in the first instance pardonable) aggression on the part of a few hungry blacks is followed by severe measures of retaliation on the settler's behalf; further outrage ensues—the cattle are perhaps found speared, or the flocks driven off into the bush. The settlers around determine to take dire vengeance on the offenders, and the passions of the white savage are aroused in hostile encounter with those of his black neighbours: the latter are hunted down like so many beasts of prey, and a whole tribe—

unoffending and offending alike — falls a sacrifice, either shot or disposed of under circumstances of still greater atrocity. Yet a great portion — perhaps all — of this might have been avoided by a little timely conciliation, and judicious forbearance, on the settler's part. In many cases the natives are found to make excellent shepherds or other farm-servants, and they are extensively employed for that purpose in the district of Port Phillip. In the latter province, the dingo (or native dog) has been nearly exterminated by the aid of strychnine, so that two of the squatter's ordinary grievances are now but little experienced in that locality. In consequence of this, the practice of yarding the sheep at night has there been in a great measure discontinued, the flocks being simply collected around the hut-keeper's abode, and left in comparative security to their almost unguarded repose.

During the droughts which occasionally prevail in New South Wales, the squatters suffer severely: the cattle die in great numbers from want of water, and the sheep are unable to obtain any nutriment from the naked and burnt soil. The common diseases to which sheep are liable in the Australian colonies are the same as in England, — namely, the scab and the catarrh, — and the remedies are of course the same. Occasionally, the flocks have been much thinned by the prevalence of these complaints, which are most common during the rainy portion of the year.

For the evils attendant on the long droughts, which deprive the flocks of their ordinary nutriment, a remedy has been found of late years in the melting-pot — immense numbers of sheep being now annually boiled down for the sake of their tallow. This prevents the extreme fluctua-

tions in price to which stock was formerly liable, since the market-value of the animal can in no case fall below the worth of the tallow which it is capable of affording. In many cases, indeed, sheep are now reared expressly for the sake of their tallow, and extensive boiling-down establishments are found in the outskirts of nearly all Australian towns. In a single year, 1849, no fewer than 743,000 sheep, and 45,000 cattle, were boiled down, and produced 160,000 cwt. of tallow. And in the following year, the amount of tallow which was furnished by the Australian flocks and herds was upwards of 217,000 cwt., and was valued at 300,000*l*. This extensive branch of produce has sprung into existence entirely since 1843, when the extraordinary depreciation in the value of stock (consequent on over-speculation during the immediately prior period) led to a trial of the practice by an enterprising colonist. The carcasses of the sheep are thrown nearly whole into the melting-vat, the hind-quarters being generally cut off and sold as butchers' meat, on account of the small quantity of fat which those portions contain. It has been reckoned that in a single year there are probably no less than 64,000,000 lbs. of meat destroyed by this boiling-down process. Think of this, ye half-starved agricultural labourers of Dorsetshire, and transport yourselves with all possible speed to these southern regions, there to turn shepherds and live luxuriously upon damper and mutton—fine legs of which may always be procured at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ or $2d.$ a pound!

It is estimated that Australia contains at the present time not fewer than 20,000,000 head of sheep, which furnished to Britain in the year 1850 upwards of 39,000,000 lbs. of

wool, besides a large quantity of tallow and other articles of produce. Of horned cattle there are at least 2,000,000, and perhaps about 200,000 horses. Squatting has therefore been a thriving pursuit in this southern continent, and the almost boundless pastures of the Australian soil afford the means of its being carried on with equal, or even increased, vigour for a long term of years yet to come. Australia is the fortunate possessor of the golden fleece, as well as of the more sparkling and seductive (though really less valuable) metallic form of the precious commodity.

CHAP. XI.

The Wool Trade.—First Importation of Sheep.—Progressive increase in the Export of Wool from the Australian Colonies.—Season of Shearing.—The Boiling-down Establishments.—Agriculture.—Calendar of Farming Operations.—Growth of the Vine.

THE prosperity of our Australian colonies is indissolubly linked with the success—almost with the continued existence—of one of the great branches of our home-manufactures; that, namely, of woollen goods. The manufacturers of the West Riding of Yorkshire regard with an anxious eye the state of the colonial markets, calculate the probable amount of the annual wool-clip, and speculate on the chances of its increase or diminution, according as seasons of drought or unwonted moisture occur at the opposite extremity of the globe.

For some years past Australia has become the most extensive wool-producing country in the world. Its flocks

are now reckoned by tens of thousands, and their annual produce of wool by millions of pounds weight, where little more more than half a century since there did not exist a single sheep—nor even a single animal of the many kinds familiar to man in the other parts of the globe! The origin and growth of the Australian wool-trade is highly curious and instructive, and affords an eminent example of the important results that have so frequently ensued from small beginnings, as well as of the national benefits that may accrue from the labours of a single individual, perseveringly devoted to the accomplishment of some particular object.

The credit of being the first to devote attention to the capabilities of New South Wales for the production of fine wool, belongs to John Macarthur—one of the earliest residents in the colony, whither he had gone, in the first instance, in the capacity of captain and paymaster-general of the New South Wales corps. As early as 1793, Mr. Macarthur had observed the effect produced by crossing a few English sheep with those brought into the colony from the Cape of Good Hope and India, and from thenceforward had his attention largely directed to the subject. It appeared that the crossing of these breeds resulted in a decided improvement of the progeny—the hairy coats of the Cape and Bengal sheep being gradually converted into wool, while the influence of the climate on the quality of the fleece was in the highest degree favourable. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Macarthur succeeded in procuring from the Cape a few sheep of the pure Merino breed, and by persevering attention—(a perseverance so great as to expose him to the ill-judged and short-sighted ridicule of

his fellow colonists)—formed, in course of time, a considerable flock of these valuable animals. In 1804 he had occasion to visit England, and during his stay here some specimens of the wool which he had succeeded in raising in the colony were accidentally seen by some of the manufacturers of woollen cloth in our own country. The superior quality of these samples was so obvious, as to lead to the immediate presentation of a memorial to the Privy Council on the subject, and Mr. Macarthur was examined before that body in reference to the state of his flocks, and the probable chance of their further improvement. The result of this was a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr. Macarthur's endeavour to improve the breed of colonial sheep, with a view to the produce of wool of fine quality, should be encouraged, and an extensive grant of land was accordingly made to him for the purpose. This land is well known in the colony as the Camden estate—lying to the south-westward of Sydney—and the flocks reared there constituted the germ of the immense wool-trade of the Australian provinces in the present day.

For a long series of years, however, Mr. Macarthur had to struggle against discouragements, difficulties of various kinds, and more especially the apathy with which his labours were regarded by many of the colonial authorities—who, like the colonists in general, were sceptical as to the probability of his views being ever realised. In 1807 the first importation of Australian wool into England took place, and amounted to 245 lbs., the produce of Mr. Macarthur's original flock. In the year 1810 (the date of Governor Macquarie's arrival in New South Wales) the

number of sheep contained within the colony amounted to about 26,000, which had increased by the close of the succeeding decade to upwards of 99,000 : — Mr. Macarthur's flock being at the latter period 6,800, three hundred of which were pure Merinos. Shortly after this period, the quality of the fleece was further improved by admixture of the Merino with the Saxon breed, large numbers of which were imported into the colony by various stock-owners ; for the attention of the colonists was now fully aroused to the importance of the subject. The wool produced on Mr. Macarthur's estate continued for a long period, however, to command a higher price in the market than that of any other proprietor.

The superior quality of the Australian wool, and the capability of an almost infinite extension of its produce, once admitted, the quantity exported continued year by year to increase, though at first only by slow degrees. In 1819 the quantity of wool shipped from New South Wales amounted to 71,299 lbs. ; in 1825, six years later, to 411,600 lbs. ; and in 1835, after the further lapse of ten years, to 3,776,191 lbs. — a quantity enormously great, considering the short period which had intervened since the commencement of the Australian wool-trade, though still not constituting a tenth part of the total quantity of wool required for British consumption. At that period the chief supply of this requisite of our manufactures was furnished by Germany, Spain, and other European countries ; the South American states also supplied a considerable amount, and smaller quantities were drawn from the Cape of Good Hope and the British possessions in the East Indies. But with the vast increase in the flocks

of New South Wales, aided by those of Van Diemen's Land and the other Australian colonies, all these sources of supply have rapidly become of diminished importance, and at the present time Australia furnishes considerably more than half of the total quantity of wool imported into Britain, while the amount received from Germany and the other countries of Europe has for many years been progressively diminishing. The following table shows the quantities of wool supplied by Australia in each of the years between 1828 and 1850:—

In 1828 ...	1,574,186 lbs.	In 1840 ...	9,721,243 lbs.
1829 ...	1,838,642	1841 ...	12,399,362
1830 ...	1,967,309	1842 ...	12,979,856
1831 ...	2,493,337	1843 ...	17,433,780
1832 ...	2,377,057	1844 ...	17,602,247
1833 ...	3,516,869	1845 ...	24,177,317
1834 ...	3,558,091	1846 ...	21,789,346
1835 ...	4,210,301	1847 ...	26,056,815
1836 ...	4,996,645	1848 ...	30,034,567
1837 ...	7,060,525	1849 ...	35,879,171
1838 ...	7,837,423	1850 ...	39,000,000
1839 ...	10,128,774		

Of the total supply at the present time, New South Wales furnishes about two-fifths, and the province of Port Phillip—the youngest of the Australian colonies—a rather larger proportion. It was with prescient sagacity, and in prophetic anticipation of the future commercial greatness of Australia, that Mr. Macarthur bestowed the name of “Argo” on the ship in which, during the early days of colonial enterprise, he imported some of the first members of his Merino flocks.

The month of November is the general shearing time in the Australian colonies. The sheep are first washed, and then left for three or four days to dry and to permit the

grease (or "yoke") from the body of the animal to rise into the wool, and thus add weight and softness to it. The natives are sometimes employed by the settlers in the process of washing, as well as in other of their farming operations. The shearing is performed in large sheds, so as to keep out both sun and rain, and is executed by men who travel from station to station for the purpose. One man will generally shear about sixty sheep a day — sometimes a larger number. As the fleeces are successively shorn they are gathered up, folded, and pressed into a large bag, or wool-pack, capable of holding about 100 fleeces, or 250 lbs. of wool. The wool-pack is previously placed, while empty, in a strong wooden box, and the fleeces closely trampled down as they are put in. When each pack is full, it constitutes a bale, on which the proprietor's name and number is marked, previous to its conveyance to the destined port for shipment. An ordinary dray, drawn by eight bullocks, will generally carry to Sydney or Melbourne (the two shipping ports for the wool produce of Australia) about fifteen or twenty bales, averaging each 250 lbs. in weight. On their return to the interior, the drays carry back to the station supplies of tea, flour, soap, sugar, tobacco, with clothing and other necessities, to refill the squatter's store with the articles requisite for the ensuing twelve months of bush life.

The wool is by no means the only valuable produce of the sheep-run. We have already mentioned the boiling-down process which large numbers of the animals undergo, and the considerable quantity of tallow which Australia has of late years supplied to the market. The hind-quarters of the sheep are extensively cured, and thus converted

into mutton hams, which are said to possess an excellent flavour. Portions of the bullock are also treated in a similar manner. The skins and bones are also valuable, the green hide of the ox being employed for a great variety of useful purposes. After the tallow has been extracted by boiling, the flesh — together with the general refuse of the boiling-down establishment — is thrown to the pigs (alas for the colonial lovers of fat pork!), which absolutely wallow in the abundance of animal matter. While in the vats, or coppers, the tallow floats on the surface, whence it is drawn off through a vent, and transferred to the casks. The gelatine, or essence of the meat, which remains below, is frequently wasted; at one time it was the practice to prepare it into cakes, like glue, which will keep for any length of time, and, when diluted in water, will furnish a strong and highly nutritious gravy, or soup. But the shipments of this gelatine made to the London market were not successful — a prejudice existing against its use. The tongues of the oxen, as well as the rounds, are sometimes salted, and preserved for export.

The boiling-down houses are situated at short distances from the principal towns. They are disgusting looking establishments, and equally offensive to the organ of smelling as to those of sight. Large herds of oxen and flocks of sheep are being continually driven into the yards, and thence to the slaughtering shed, where the axe and the knife are in active employment. The ground is deluged with the blood of hundreds of struggling and dying animals, who are rapidly skinned, chopped up, and thrown into the boilers — often while the flesh is yet quivering.

Agriculture is generally a less important pursuit in the

Australian colonies than sheep and cattle-farming, and especially so in the provinces of New South Wales and Port Phillip. In the entire province of New South Wales, there are not more than 165,000 acres under actual cultivation. In Van Diemen's Land, and also in South Australia, a greater share of attention is bestowed on the culture of the soil.

The objects of cultivation vary—as has been remarked elsewhere—with the differences of climate and other circumstances. Wheat, barley, oats, Indian corn, tobacco, potatoes, turnips, and English grasses, have been the articles of most common growth ever since the formation of the English settlements on these southern shores. The vine has been introduced at a later period, and promises ere long to engage a large and profitable share of the settler's attention.

The common English plough and harrow is generally employed by the Australian cultivator, and the mode of working the land is for the most part modelled upon that of England. Manuring, rotation of crops, and the practice of artificial draining and irrigation, are as yet far from common operations, though they are successfully pursued upon particular properties. In Van Diemen's Land, especially, there are not a few cases in which the practice of scientific agriculture may be seen in its fullest and most efficient operation. In all the Australian colonies, bullocks are preferred to horses for the purpose of ploughing; they are cheaper, more easily fed, and draw more steadily than horses.

The calendar of farming operations in Australia is exactly the reverse of that which is familiar to the agri-

culturist of the northern hemisphere—a consequence of the opposite periods of the year at which the seasons of summer and winter fall.

The month of *January* there corresponds, so far as agricultural operations are concerned, with that of August in our own country. It is in January that the reaping and getting in of the Australian harvest is concluded; the wheat is thrashed, the farmer gathers the stubble of the early maize, ploughs the land for the next wheat crop, and weeds the potato-fields.

The *February* of Australia is the month in which the barley harvest and the sowing of the turnips begin; while the ploughing of the land for the next wheat crop, and the clearing of the potato-fields, continues. In New South Wales this month is also the proper time for cutting and drying the leaves of the tobacco plant.

Towards the end of *March* the farmers commonly secure all their maize crops, the stubble of which, in the northern parts of New South Wales, is sometimes ploughed in for wheat. The sowing of turnips is also continued during this month.

In *April*, the gathering in of the maize proceeds, and the sowing of the wheat begins. The second cutting of the tobacco is now commenced; and in Van Diemen's Land, where the moist season has begun to advance, the corn-stacks are thatched and put in order. The potatoes are usually dug up, and partly stored, during the same period.

The month of *May* allows the New South Wales cultivator to proceed with, and bring to a close, the sowing of his wheat, which in Van Diemen's Land commonly termi-

nates with the end of the preceding month. The cutting of tobacco, and the gathering of maize, is completed, and also the storing of the potatoes.

June—the December, or mid-winter, of Europe—is employed in New South Wales in sowing the latest wheat, clearing the maize-land of its stubble, and in thrashing out the corn.

July is the month in which the Australian farmer prepares the land for early maize, tobacco, and potatoes. In Van Diemen's Land, he breaks new soil, and commences grubbing out the stumps from the corn-fields.

The month of *August* is commonly devoted to preparing the land for spring crops, and, in the northern districts of New South Wales, to planting potatoes.

An Australian *September* is the time for sowing spring wheat and barley, and, in some parts of the colonies, for laying down artificial grasses. In this month a general planting of maize and potatoes takes place, and turnips are removed.

In *October* the farmer completes the planting of maize and potatoes, and prepares the land for tobacco.

In *November* the wheat harvest begins, and in some districts the crops are secured before the end of the month. The ploughing and preparing land for the early maize follow, as also the making of hay.

December—the month familiar to our northern experiences by its chilly influences—is in Australia the period of general harvest. The labours of the reaper are in active exertion, and beneath the warmth of an Australian sun the sheaves are often carried and stacked the day after reaping. The wheat is cut at the height of two or three feet from

the ground—as near, indeed, as possible to the ear, as the straw is of little or no value. The clearing of the September maize, and the potato-fields, is also attended to, as well as the topping of tobacco, and the planting of new maize.*

The most extensive use to which maize is applied in the Australian colonies is the feeding of horses and pigs. It is usually the first crop which the settler raises from his cleared land, and, as it is reaped in May or early June, is often immediately succeeded by a crop of wheat on the same ground, which becomes ripe for the sickle before the close of the year. Oats are generally cut green, when the ear is full, but before it ripens, and converted into hay. Horses thrive well on this oaten hay, large quantities of which are weekly seen in the Sydney market. Barley is largely consumed by the distillers and brewers of the colonies, and when cut green, as is sometimes the case, is found an excellent food for horses kept in the stable. Potatoes thrive nearly equally well at every season, and are planted almost all the year round.

Excepting for garden purposes, the use of manure is almost unknown in Australia. With the natural fertility of a virgin soil, the ground is frequently found to bear a repetition of the same crop for several years in succession; and where land is so abundant, the settler prefers bringing new, and as yet untilled, acres under the plough, to the labour of replenishing a soil which he has partially exhausted by over-cropping. But the process will require to be modified as the population of the colonies increases,

* For the above calendar of farming operations, we are indebted chiefly to Count Strzelecki's valuable work.

and the practice of scientific agriculture must receive a larger share of attention than it has hitherto done.

The Australian soil is, however, in many cases gifted with extraordinary productiveness; forty or fifty bushels per acre is the average yield of wheat, and maize frequently averages sixty bushels. The wheat of South Australia is of the finest quality, and commands a higher price than any other in the London market, besides being supplied to the Cape and the Mauritius, as well as to the neighbouring colonies of New South Wales, Port Phillip, and Van Diemen's Land. The soil of New South Wales is naturally less suited for the growth of wheat, and a comparison of its produce in this respect (and also of that of Van Diemen's Land) with the wheat of other corn-growing countries, shows a great deficiency in the proportion of *gluten*—the nutritious element of this grain. This, however, materially depends upon the amount of care that has been bestowed on the culture, and the attention given to irrigation, the rotation of crops, and the change of seed. When these are disregarded, as has been too generally the case both in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, the tendency of the wheat-grain is to degenerate—to acquire a greater per-centage of bran or husk, and a smaller proportion of the azotised principle embodied in the gluten.

The vine has of late years become an object of importance in the Australian colonies, and its culture is rapidly extending. No part of the globe is better suited to its growth, and the grapes ripened beneath the glowing skies of the southern hemisphere are of the finest possible quality. Vigorous efforts have been recently made to

extend the vineyards in the more northerly portions of New South Wales, and also in the province of South Australia, with a view to the produce of native wines, and these endeavours have already met with a large share of success. Several light wines, somewhat resembling the similar wines of France and Germany, and decidedly superior to the average quality of the wines produced at the Cape, have already been produced. With extended care and attention, aided by the employment of labourers brought for the purpose from the wine-growing countries of Europe, there is little doubt that Australia will ere long rank as a wine-producing region on an extensive scale. This is in every way to be desired, for (anomalous as the fact may at first appear) it is well known that the peasantry of wine-growing countries are always distinguished by habits of sobriety and temperance. It is in colder and less bounteous lands that man seeks the excitement derived from the consumption of ardent spirits.

CHAP. XII.

New South Wales.—Its extent.—Maritime Frontier.—Harbours.—Interior of the Colony.—Mountains.—Their Geological Formation.—Minerals.—Rivers.—Rural Scenery of the Colony.—Native Names of Places.—Fruits.—Orange Culture.

NEW SOUTH WALES—the oldest, most populous, and most important, of the British colonies in this portion of the globe—lies on the eastern side of the Australian continent. From the shores of the Pacific it stretches into the interior as far as the line of the 141st meridian, which divides it from the province of South Australia. Its northern frontier is indicated by the twenty-sixth parallel of south latitude, which intersects the coast at some distance to the northward of Moreton Bay. The southern frontier of the colony is marked by a line drawn from Cape Howe, at the south-east extremity of the Australian continent, to the nearest source of the river Murray, and thence along the course of that river to the meridian of 141°, where it again touches the South Australian province. The area embraced within these limits is probably not less than 400,000 square miles, forming a square and compact mass of territory, with a maritime frontier upon its eastern side.

Between the 26th parallel and the promontory of Cape Howe, the coast of New South Wales embraces a range of about nine hundred miles, the greater portion broken by inlets of various magnitude—many of them forming safe and excellent harbours,—and throughout which are the mouths of numerous rivers, that pour their waters into

the immense expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Many portions of the coast are iron-bound—formed, that is, by high cliffs; and the entrances of the different harbours are for the most part narrow, so as only to become visible when a vessel nears the land. Viewed from its maritime frontier, New South Wales, though devoid of that commanding boldness of feature which belongs to some other lands, and which powerfully excites the imagination of the beholder, yet possesses an aspect which is wanting neither in interest nor variety. The foreground of the picture is composed of an undulating country, for the most part richly wooded, and rising to the westward until it forms a kind of central region of verdant and round-topped hills and ridges, promiscuously grouped together; while in the back-ground there is seen a distant range of high land which stretches along the horizon, and is broken at intervals by peaks of striking shape and conspicuous elevation. This dark-looking ridge, which (to use an expression that has recently acquired a political as well as geographical significance) “looms” in the distance, forms a portion of an extended chain of heights by which the colony is intersected from north to south, in a direction parallel with its coast-line.

The most northerly of the inlets on the coast of New South Wales is *Moreton Bay*—an extensive arm of the sea, lying between the parallels of 27° and 28° , and divided from the open expanse of the Pacific by two long and narrow islands. To the more northern of these the name of Moreton Island has been given; the southern is called Stradbroke Island. Between Stradbroke Island and the mainland of Australia the channel is narrow, and

only affords a passage for boats; the entrances practicable for larger vessels are those lying off the northern and southern extremities of Moreton Island. The southern passage—between Stradbroke and Moreton Islands—is dangerous, and is rarely used. The northern passage—between Moreton Island and the mainland—has eighteen feet of water over the bar which crosses its entrance, and may be passed in perfect safety by ships of considerable burthen. Within this passage, the bay forms a body of water sixty miles in length by about twenty in width, and contains several small islands, besides numerous shoals and banks, with deeper channels lying between. Moreton Bay receives numerous rivers,—the two most considerable of which are the Brisbane and the Logan,—and is the outlet for an extensive tract of country, which is now in rapid progress of being filled by an industrious population, and which is likely to become, at no distant period, a distinct and important colony. Between Moreton Bay and Port Jackson a constant communication is maintained by steamboats.

A short distance to the southward of Moreton Bay is Point Danger, and, still further south, Cape Byron—the most eastern point of the Australian continent. Cape Byron is in latitude $28^{\circ} 36'$ south. Mount Warning, which rises in its neighbourhood to the height of 3300 feet above the sea, indicates by its name the unsafe character of this portion of the coast, and the necessity of giving it (in nautical phraseology) “a wide berth,” in order to keep clear of its perils.

About sixty miles south of Cape Byron is *Shoal Bay*, an estuary into which the Clarence river discharges its

waters. Near the coast to the southward are the Solitary Islands—a group of rocks frequented only by seals, and formerly much visited by the hardy boatmen of Van Diemen's Land who engaged in the capture of these animals. At the distance of three-quarters of a degree beyond is *Trial Bay*, into which the river M'Leay falls. Trial Bay is the outlet of the fine pastoral tract to which the name of New England has been given. The mouth of the M'Leay is in $30^{\circ} 50'$ S. latitude.

Port Macquarie, the inlet next in succession (lat. $31^{\circ} 26'$ S.), is a considerable harbour, into which the river Hastings falls. It forms the outlet for an extensive and fertile region, occupied as a penal settlement in the earlier days of the colony. Port Macquarie lies two hundred miles to the north-eastward of Sydney. For a considerable distance to the southward of Port Macquarie the coast is lined by extensive lagoons, most of which communicate with the sea, but are only capable of use for boat-navigation: no inlet of any magnitude occurs until we reach *Port Stephens*, in latitude $32^{\circ} 43'$ south. Harrington and Farquhar Inlets—midway between Port Macquarie and Port Stephens—are only the two principal mouths of the river Manning, which reaches the sea through a delta formed of several small channels.

Port Stephens is an extensive estuary, fifteen miles long, but less than a quarter of those dimensions in width, and entered by a narrow channel of half a mile across. It forms a fine harbour, but the entrance is much impeded by sand-banks: at its upper extremity, Port Stephens receives the waters of the river Karuah. The Australian Agricultural Company have a large portion of their exten-

sive grants of land on the banks of this river. Port Stephens is only 100 miles distant from Sydney.

Port Hunter (lat. $32^{\circ} 55' S.$), situated 80 miles to the northward of Sydney, is—next to Port Jackson—the most important estuary on the coast of New South Wales. It receives the waters of the river Hunter, and is the out-port for the extensive and rich tract of country drained by that stream. It is also the chief seat of the coal trade of the colony—extensive workings of coal lying around the port, and for some distance up the banks of the river. Off the entrance of Port Hunter is Nobby Island—a detached mass of rock. On the mainland, to the south, is the flourishing port of Newcastle—so called from the valuable coal-workings in its immediate vicinity, and in imitation of its great prototype in the northern hemisphere.

Broken Bay, in latitude $33^{\circ} 35' S.$, is only a short distance to the northward of Port Jackson. It is, as the name implies, an estuary of irregular shape, stretching a long way into the interior, and broken by numerous projecting headlands on either side. The southern headland at the entrance of this bay is visible from the Sydney lighthouse. The river Hawkesbury enters the upper extremity of Broken Bay, which is too much exposed to the influence of easterly winds to constitute a safe place of resort for shipping.

Port Jackson (lat. $33^{\circ} 51' S.$) and *Botany Bay*, a few miles further to the southward, have been referred to in a preceding page. Immediately to the south of Botany Bay is *Port Hacking*, a small and beautiful harbour, accessible only to the smaller class of vessels. Thence to the southward, there is no important inlet before reaching

Jervis Bay (latitude $35^{\circ} 6' S.$), a fine harbour with an entrance of two miles across, and stretching about twelve miles inland. *Jervis Bay* forms a commodious port, easy of access, and surrounded by a district in which both wood and water are abundant; this tract supplies the Sydney market with potatoes, as well as with a small portion of grain. The river Shoalhaven enters the sea a few miles to the northward of *Jervis Bay*.

Bateman Bay, fifty miles further to the south (lat. $35^{\circ} 44'$) is a small estuary formed by the mouth of the river Bundo, or Clyde. At a distance of nearly 100 miles beyond is *Twofold Bay* (lat. $37^{\circ} 5'$), which is more frequented than any other harbour on the east coast to the southward of Port Jackson. There is good anchorage in *Twofold Bay*, but it is exposed to easterly winds. It is, however, frequently used as a harbour of refuge by vessels which experience difficulty in encountering the westerly gales that prevail in Bass's Strait during a great portion of the year. *Twofold Bay* is the outlet of an extensive pastoral tract called Maneroo Plains, and is a considerable port for the shipment of stock to New Zealand. It also possesses whaling establishments of some magnitude. At a short distance from the coast, midway between *Bateman* and *Twofold Bays*, is *Montague Island*. *Cape Howe*, the south-eastern point of the Australian continent, and the extreme limit of the New South Wales coast in a southerly direction, is situated thirty miles beyond *Twofold Bay*. At this point the coast trends to the south-westward, and forms part of the maritime frontier of the province of Victoria.

The great feature in the physical geography of New

South Wales is the chain of high ground stretching through the country in a north and south direction, and to different portions of which the colonists have given the names of the Blue Mountains, the Liverpool Range, the Australian Alps, and other appellations. This extended range of heights lies at an average distance of between seventy and eighty miles from the coast, and forms, throughout its course, the dividing line between the eastern and western waters of the colony. Its mean height is about 3500 feet above the level of the sea. The country to the eastward has everywhere a rapid slope towards the waters of the Pacific, the rivers running in deep and narrow valleys between the transverse spurs of the mountain-chain. On its western side (or towards the interior) the slope of the country is much more gradual, and the average fall of the rivers is consequently less considerable.*

About the latitude of 30° south, the dividing high ground assumes the character of a mountain-chain, crowned with granitic and porphyritic crests—in some places peaked or needle-shaped in appearance, in others exhibiting a flattened figure. Upon either side, the country here exhibits a sloping surface, with numerous spurs both to the eastward and westward of the chain—the whole tract being deeply furrowed with valleys and ravines. Further to the southward (in about latitude $30^{\circ} 40'$), the high land assumes a direction almost due west, and takes the name

* According to Strzelecki, the average fall of the eastern rivers is forty-eight feet in every mile; and the average fall of the land, produced by the transversal spurs, ninety-six feet. The average fall of the westerly waters is nine feet in every mile, and that of the country (within a distance of seventy-two miles from the crest of the dividing range) is twenty feet.

of the Liverpool Range, which forms the northern boundary of the Hunter's River district. The Liverpool Range is crowned by several peaks of greenstone, which rear their naked, conical, and distorted tops to the elevation of 4700 feet above the sea. From the summits of Mount Oxley and Mount M'Arthur, the eye ranges over an extensive and beautiful panorama of the most varied description, blending into the high ground of the Liverpool Plains on the one side, and into the fertile valley of the Hunter on the other. Resuming its southerly or south-westerly course, and forming, as it advances, a succession of high granitic peaks, the main range throws off to the eastward, between the parallels of 33° and 34° , an extensive basaltic spur, which ramifies into the sandstone region known as the Blue Mountains; of the difficulties attending the passage of which, in the early days of the colony, we have spoken in a previous page. The Blue Mountains are difficult even to approach, and still more so to explore. Between the ranges lie yawning chasms, deep winding gorges, and frightful precipices. "Narrow, gloomy, and profound, these stupendous rents in the bosom of the earth are enclosed between gigantic walls of a sandstone rock, sometimes receding from — sometimes frightfully overhanging—the dark bed of the ravine, with its black and silent eddies, or its foaming torrents of water."*

Amidst this mountain wilderness, the unaccustomed traveller extricates himself with difficulty from the labyrinth of surrounding ravines, steep precipices, yawning chasms, and lofty summits. It is across this region, however, that the principal line of communication between

* Strzelecki.

Sydney and the interior of the colony has been formed, at considerable expense, and by the persevering employment of means which nothing but the ready supply of convict labour could have enabled so young and thinly-peopled a country to furnish. The main road which has been carried across the Blue Mountains, under the direction of the colonial surveyors, is worthy, in every respect, to rank among the highest efforts of engineering skill as applied to labours of such a kind.

The eastern declivity of the Blue Mountains overhangs the valleys of the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers, the upper tributaries of which rise amongst their deep recesses. One of these—the river Clwyd—flows through a beautiful and smiling valley, enclosed on either side by the mountain region. From the basaltic summit of Mount Hay, the eye commands an extensive prospect both to the east and the northward: in the foreground, at its base, the river Grose (a tributary of the Hawkesbury) winds through a sandstone ravine, the perpendicular depth of which is 1500 feet, while on the other side of the torrent are other basaltic eminences, spreading far and wide over a tract of varied surface. The summit of Mount York—to the eastward of the valley of the Clwyd—is 3440 feet above the sea. Mount Victoria, on the opposite side of the same valley, and over the summit of which the great western road is carried, is of nearly equal elevation.

From the point at which the advanced group of the Blue Mountains branches off (about lat. $33^{\circ} 30'$), the dividing ridge pursues its southerly course—gradually bending more and more to the south-westward, and throwing off, as it advances, various subordinate spurs and

ridges. One of these, which leaves the main chain a little to the southward of the 34th parallel, runs in a north-westerly direction, and forms the basaltic group of Canobolas, 4610 feet above the sea. Between the Canobolas and the Blue Mountains there intervenes the valley of the river Macquarie, on the upper portion of which the town of Bathurst is situated. In its progress southward, the main chain assumes great variety of aspect,—in some places smooth and round, and less intersected by ravines—and in others rising in elevation, and exhibiting bolder features. Its greenstone and sienitic crest bears at times the appearance of an Alpine table-land; while in some localities it breaks into sharp-edged and dentiform summits, capped here and there with snow, even in the midst of summer. This high and broken country extends along both sides of the valley of the river Shoalhaven, stretching to the immediate neighbourhood of the sea-coast about Jervis Bay.

Further to the west, about the sources of the rivers Murrumbidgee, Murray, and their tributaries, the country exhibits still bolder features, forming clusters of broken peaks, and steep, wall-like, ridges, which form the outwork of the high chain of mountains known as the Australian Alps—the Warragong of native geography. The loftiest summit of the Australian Alps is Mount Kosciusko, a craggy cone of sienite, which rises to 6500 feet above the sea, and from which the eye ranges over an extent of 7000 square miles. “Standing above the adjacent mountains which could either detract from its imposing aspect, or intercept the view, Mount Kosciusko,” says Strzelecki, who was the first to explore this region, “is one of those

few elevations, the ascent of which, far from disappointing, presents the traveller with all that can remunerate fatigue. In the north-eastward view, the eye is carried as far back as the Shoalhaven country, the ridges of all the spurs of Moneiro and Twofold Bays, as well as those which, to the westward, enclose the tributaries of the Murrumbidgee, being conspicuously delineated. Beneath the feet, looking from the very verge of the cone downwards almost perpendicularly, the eye plunges into a fearful gorge three thousand feet deep, in the bed of which the sources of the Murray gather their contents, and roll their united waters to the west.”*

Mount Kosciusko stands near the border line between the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, but within the former province. The snowy chain of the Australian Alps thence resumes its south-westerly course, covering

* In ascending Mount Kosciusko, Count Strzelecki found the stratum of air at a height of 3000 feet (or half-way up the mountain) considerably colder, during the day-time, than that at its summit; and a similar fact was noticed on the ascent of the mountain called Ben Lomond, in Van Diemen's Land. These and similar observations made in ascending high mountains in other parts of the world, tend to establish the fact, that the thermometrical conditions of the currents in the upper strata of the atmosphere are equally variable as their direction; and to show that, contrary to the general laws of hydrostatics, the colder current, in some cases, moves between two warmer currents, entirely by virtue of its volume. On ascending Mowna Roa (in the Sandwich Islands), the same observer noticed, within the elevation of 6000 feet, three currents, of different directions, intensity, and thermometrical condition—the intermediate one, at an altitude of 4000 feet, having a temperature 12° lower than that at 2000 feet greater altitude. A similar condition of the air is illustrated in the fact, that rain has often been observed to fall in Van Diemen's Land, on a winter's morning, when the temperature at the surface is below the freezing point.

with its various ramifications the greater portion of the eastern half of the province of Victoria, but gradually subsiding to the southward, as it approaches the shores of Port Phillip and Western Port. A portion of the chain, however, extends in a continuous succession of heights to the extremity of Cape Wilson (the southernmost point of Australia), and, after sinking for a time beneath the waters of the ocean, re-appears in the numerous granitic islands of Bass's Strait, and in the peaked and serrated mountains of Van Diemen's Land.

Throughout the extended range of high land which has thus been traced for a distance of nearly 800 miles,—from about the latitude of 30° southward to the promontory of Cape Wilson,—the same geological and mineral features uniformly prevail. All the higher masses consist of crystalline and unstratified rocks, amongst which granite, sienite, and quartz, predominate. Intermingled with these crystalline rocks there occur in a few places mica-schists, together with various other rocks which possess a slaty texture, and exhibit marks of stratification. But the crystalline rocks rise everywhere to a higher level than the sedimentary formations, and extend over a considerable breadth of the chain on either side, stretching far into the interior of the continent. It is in the portions of Australia traversed by this extended range of high ground, and chiefly amongst the valleys watered by mountain torrents that descend from its rugged slopes, that gold has recently been found in such extraordinary abundance; and, from the uniformity of geological formation through the entire succession of heights, there is every reason to suppose that the precious metal will be found to exist, in greater or less quantity, through-

out its whole extent. Sandstone rocks occur abundantly in many parts of New South Wales, both among the Blue Mountains and elsewhere: limestone is rarely found, and in many districts, as in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney, is altogether wanting.

Besides gold, the mineral produce of New South Wales includes copper, lead, iron, and coal, the three former of which are known to occur in various parts of the mountain region. The coal is found chiefly in the valley of the river Hunter, and embraces several varieties of this valuable mineral, some of which are very extensively worked—both for use in the colony and for shipment to the neighbouring provinces. Some parts of New South Wales contain extremely beautiful marbles, very valuable for statuary and other ornamental purposes; as on the Wollondilly (a tributary of the upper Nepean, to the south-westward of Sydney), where the rock is as closely-grained and as white as the Carrara marble; and in the upper portion of the Shoalhaven Valley, where the stone is a jet black traversed by veins of white calcareous spar. To the southward of Wellington Valley (within the region of the upper Macquarie and its tributaries) there are also innumerable varieties of finely-variegated marbles, the caves that occur amongst which possess the highest interest for the geologist.

The great defect of New South Wales is its deficiency of water. If its rivers were on a scale of magnitude proportioned to its other natural features, it would be entitled to rank amongst the most favoured countries of the globe; but, as we have before remarked, their supply of water is exceedingly precarious, and many of them are almost lost during the prevalence of dry weather. The coast-district is, in

general, better watered than the wide plains of the interior, and contains many streams which admit of steam-navigation, for some distance above their mouths, throughout the year.

The river Hawkesbury, which flows into Broken Bay (to the northward of Sydney), is one of the most important among the coast-streams, and along its banks are some fine tracts of arable land, among the most fertile and best cultivated in the colony. The Hawkesbury draws its waters principally from the high tract of the Blue Mountains: in its upper course it has the name of Nepean river, and receives the stream of the Wollondilly. The Hawkesbury flows in its upper portion through a champaign country, on which its own successive inundations have gradually deposited many feet of the richest alluvial soil. In some parts, however, the mountain-ridges on either side approach close to the bed of the stream, or only leave a narrow patch of alluvial soil on the one side, while the river sweeps immediately below the base of the opposite rock. The town of Windsor, one of the principal places in the interior of New South Wales, stands on the banks of the Hawkesbury, at a distance of seventy miles above its mouth. The river is navigable for vessels of 100 tons burthen for a distance of four miles above Windsor.

The river Hunter, further to the northward, waters one of the finest districts in the colony. It draws its waters chiefly from the southern flanks of the Liverpool Range, and is joined by several tributaries on its way to the sea, which it reaches after a course of about 200 miles. The river Goulburn, which flows from a more western part of the same region, joins its upper course; nearer the sea it

receives the streams to which the names of Patterson and William rivers have been given, although both of them (as well as the main channel of the Hunter) possess native names of more euphonious character, and which were well deserving of preservation. The native appellation of the river Hunter is the *Coquun*, under which name a colonial poet commemorates it in the following lines* :—

“ Exhausted by the summer sun,
The school-boy fords the broad *Coquun*;
For then the slow meandering stream
Shrinks from the hot sun's fiery beam,
And, like a wounded serpent, crawls
From Cumleroy to Maitland Falls.
But when the autumnal deluge swells
Each little brook in yonder dells,
And twice ten thousand torrents pour
From cliff and rock with deafening roar,
Oh! then he rolls with manly pride,
Nor steam nor storm can stem his tide!”

Patterson's River possesses the native name of *Yimmang*, and William's River that of *Dooribang*—both of which might surely be deemed worthy of preservation, and have rendered superfluous the bestowal of the very commonplace appellatives by which they have been displaced. Nor are there wanting among the colonists those who appreciate the undesirability of such changes, and the superiority of the native designations for metrical purposes. From the same source whence the above lines are taken, we quote a few of the lines contained in a pastoral ode to the *Yimmang* River—not more on account of their intrinsic merit

* See Lang's "History of New South Wales" (2nd edit.) vol. ii. p. 90.

than because they help to give the reader an idea of the rural scenery by which this favoured district of Australia is distinguished, and to show that in the woods and wilds of the great south land there exist (as where, indeed, in Nature's aspect does there not?) the outward attributes of poetry and refinement, even if the inner sense be often wanting:—

“ On Yimmang's banks I love to stray
And charm the vacant hours away;
At early dawn, or sultry noon,
Or latest evening, when the moon
Looks downward, like a peasant's daughter,
To view her charms in the still water.
There would I walk at early morn,
Along the ranks of Indian corn,
Whose dew-bespangled tassels shine
Like diamonds from Golconda's mine,
While numerous cobs out-bursting yield
Fair promise of a harvest field.
There would I muse on nature's book,
By deep lagoon or shady brook,
When the bright sun ascends on high,
Nor sees a cloud in all the sky,
And hot December's sultry breeze
Scarce moves the leaves of yonder trees.
Then from the forest's thickest shade,
Scared at the sound my steps had made,
The ever-graceful kangaroo
Would bound, and often stop to view,
And look as if he meant to scan
The traits of European man.”

The pleasing impression conveyed by the above lines is far from being added to by the reflection that the Yimmang of the poet's verse is, after all, only the “Patterson” of our colonial maps. But, besides their suitability for the

service of the muse, the native names of Australian topography—like the Indian appellations in the New World—are in many cases (perhaps in all) highly descriptive, and are intended to convey a meaning beyond that of mere sound. Thus *Jerran* (or *frightful*) is the appropriate name of an exceedingly precipitous mountain near Liverpool Plains; *Bardo Narrang* (which means “Little Water”) is the native appellation of a small creek that joins the Hawkesbury; and Woolloomooloo Bay, the name of one of the southern arms of Port Jackson, close to the city of Sydney—is a corruption of the native *Wāla-Māla*, that is, “the place of tombs,” from its having been a former burial-place of the blacks. Such names as these embody the native poetry of the Australian soil, and for the sake of their more general preservation we might have been well content to dispense with some of the Goulburns, Macquaries, Pattersons, Peels, and Melvilles,—to say nothing of still more common-place appellations,—which are so thickly bestrewn over our maps of Australia. Such immortality as a colonial surveyor can bestow is, however, cheaply purchased at the cost of a newly observed mountain peak, a creek that is met with for the first time, or a plain that promises well for the interests of the squatter!

To return, however, from this digression. About thirty miles above the mouth of Hunter's River is the flourishing town of Maitland; steamers ascend the river to this point, and communicate daily with the southern metropolis. Maitland is a place of considerable trade, and possesses an extensive manufacture of colonial tobacco.

Further to the northward, the rivers Manning, Hastings, M'Leay, Clarence, Richmond, Logan, and Brisbane,

succeed one another along the coast, and flow through districts which are in rapid process of occupation by the cultivator, and are fast becoming rich in the varied productions of the vegetable kingdom. With the approach to the warmer latitude of Moreton Bay, into which the two last-named rivers fall, a climate and scenery of more tropical character become manifest. Palms flourish in this district, the pine-apple grows luxuriantly in the open air, and the banana offers its rich clusters of fruit; while the cotton-plant is capable of being cultivated to an extent which may perhaps, at no very distant period, render the manufacturers of southern Lancashire as deeply interested in the prosperity of the Australian colonies as their wool-consuming brethren of the West Riding already are. But the Moreton Bay settlers are not without the usual drawbacks incident to countries bordering on the tropics. On the banks of the Brisbane and its tributary streams, snakes, mosquitoes, marsh-leeches, stinging ants, and other obnoxious creations of the animal world, are more than usually abundant, and the waters of the river, towards its mouth, are infested by sharks.

Of the climate and agriculture of New South Wales we have already spoken. Besides the fruits and other productions of the soil to which reference has been elsewhere made, there are everywhere found in the gardens of New South Wales such fruits as the orange, fig, peach, plum, apricot, cherry, grape, nectarine, and many others; while among the vegetables are enumerated the carrot, parsnip, turnip, cauliflower, asparagus, broccoli, onion, cabbage, and potato, together with the melon, cucumber, and green peas, which latter may be had during the whole of the

winter season. The English settler may therefore, with few exceptions, have his table supplied with the luxuries to which he has been accustomed at home, as well as with a vast number that are foreign to the English soil. Apples, gooseberries, and currants, do not flourish in the Australian soil, which is too dry, and the air too hot, for their growth; they thrive luxuriantly in the cooler atmospheres of Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand.

The orchards and orangeries of New South Wales are truly magnificent, especially those in the neighbourhood of Port Jackson, the shores of which are in many places lined with groves of orange trees, covered with the richest fruit. It is no uncommon thing for as many as twenty thousand dozen of oranges to be produced in a single season from the plantations of an individual settler. The orange trees are planted in long double rows, with an avenue between; and the view along the avenue, on either side of which the dark green foliage of the trees contrasts beautifully with the bright yellow fruit with which the branches are laden, can scarcely fail (says Dr. Lang) to remind the classical scholar of the fabled gardens of the Hesperides.

The fig and the peach are equally abundant, both in New South Wales and the adjacent Australian provinces. Vast numbers of peaches are annually thrown aside as food for the pigs, and a basket-load of them may during the season be procured in the Sydney markets for a few pence.

If a peach-stone is thrown into the ground in a favourable situation (that is, where it has a chance for obtaining some supply of moisture) in any part of Australia, a plentiful crop of fruit may almost surely be gathered within a

period of three or four years afterwards, from the tree that shoots up in its place. An interesting practice of the late Mr. Allan Cunningham, the botanist of Australia, is mentioned in connection with this extraordinary and almost spontaneous productiveness of the soil. When travelling in the interior, he uniformly carried with him a small bag of peach-stones; and whenever he found a suitable spot of ground amidst the vast wilderness, he planted a few of them in the soil, in the hope that the future trees might one day afford a timely supply of food either to some wandering native, or to a settler who might have accidentally lost his way among these distant wilds. A beneficent practice, and one suggestive of many serious moral reflections!

A fruit called the *loquat*, of Chinese origin, is much consumed in New South Wales, and has become naturalised amongst the productions of its soil. It is of the size of a plum, and has a yellowish colour. Several other specimens of the indigenous vegetation of the Celestial Empire are to be seen in the gardens of the colony, and the tea-plant is found to grow in the open air in perfect health and vigour. Some efforts have lately been made for the extension of its culture, which, with the assistance of Chinese labourers, might no doubt be profitably effected in the more northerly districts of the colony. The silkworm, too, is found to thrive, and some beautiful specimens of colonial silk have been produced.

CHAP. XIII.

Sydney.—Its Inhabitants.—Buildings.—Society at the Antipodes.—
Trade of Sydney.—Other Towns of New South Wales.—Roads.
—Travelling in the Interior.—Trade of the Colony.—Whale-
fishery.

AN unusually large proportion of the inhabitants of New South Wales—nearly a third of the entire number—reside in the town of Sydney, the population of which falls little short of sixty thousand, while that of the whole colony (in 1851) amounted only to 187,000. Sydney is altogether an extraordinary place: it sprang into existence, as we have seen, under circumstances of the most unusual description, and has increased in size and importance with a rapidity which has no parallel, excepting in the newly-created cities of the United States.

Sydney lies principally along the westward slope of one of the many headlands that project into the waters of Port Jackson, and upon the southern side of that most magnificent of natural harbours. The estuary running up to the west of the neck of land on which the city stands forms Darling Harbour—along which the wharfs and principal warehouses are built: the inlet situated to the eastward of the town is called Woolloomooloo Bay—a place of comparative quiet and retirement, though frequented by the good people of the Australian metropolis for the enjoyment of bathing, so necessary in a warm climate. Colonel Mundy tells us that this has become of late a dangerous pastime, owing to the occasional presence of sharks, which

have frequented the waters of Port Jackson ever since the accident of a dead whale—followed by a host of these voracious and hateful monsters of the deep—having been drifted within its entrance. The principal streets run in a north and south direction, parallel to the shore of Darling Harbour, and slope gradually to the southward, from the higher ground which lies immediately adjacent to Sydney Cove, at the northern extremity of the town, and around which its older portion is situated. George Street, the chief thoroughfare and the scene of the busiest traffic, contains shops which almost rival those of the British capital in style and display of goods, and the whole aspect of the town forcibly impresses the stranger with the idea of wealth, active industry, and commercial prosperity. Striking, indeed, is the change which has been effected within little more than half a century from the time when Governor Phillip first landed his party of convicts on a spot which had never previously been trodden by the foot of civilised man, to that in which (as in the present day) the ground in the neighbourhood of the principal thoroughfares has been known to sell at upwards of 20,000*l.* an acre, and in which moderate-sized houses are let at rentals of between three and four hundred pounds a year!

There is not a more thoroughly *English* town on the face of the globe—not even in England itself—than this southern emporium of the commerce of nations. Sydney is entirely wanting in the novel and exotic aspect which belongs to foreign capitals. The emigrant lands there, and hears his own mother-tongue spoken on every side: he looks around upon the busy life of its crowded streets, and he gazes on scenes exactly similar to those daily observable

in the highways of London, Liverpool, Birmingham, or Manchester. This arises from the fact of the vast majority of the emigrant population of the Australian colonies having been exclusively of British origin. The aborigines are seen but rarely — generally in the outskirts of the town — and, when seen, are squalid and miserable-looking objects. The essential features of the place are purely English. “Were it not,” says Colonel Mundy, “for an occasional orange tree in full bloom or fruit, in the back-yard of some of the older cottages, or a flock of little green parrots whistling as they alight for a moment on a house-top, one might fancy himself at Brighton or Plymouth.”

There is abundance of fine sandstone in the vicinity of Sydney, and the majority of the public buildings bear evidence of its profusion. Many of them constitute creditable displays of architectural skill, and the newer portions of the town are, on the whole, well laid out, and attractive in aspect. The older quarters, especially in the vicinity of the harbour, are narrow, crowded, and dirty — though not more so than is generally (perhaps universally) the case in the seaport towns of our own country. Sydney has its “St. Giles’s” — a quarter of the town termed “the Rocks,” which extends over the high ground at the back of George Street. Here are collected, and crowded together in wretched hovels, the worst and most depraved classes of the population, and scenes which exhibit the lowest and most offensive forms of vice and villany are of daily, and even hourly, occurrence. But the police of Sydney are active and vigilant, and the stranger may walk even here unmolested. In fact, life and property are nowhere safer than in the metropolis of New South Wales

—amongst a population of whom a very large number possess the unenviable distinction of having been the thieves, pickpockets, swindlers, burglars, and rogues of every description—not even excepting murderers—of the mother country!

Sydney derives a plentiful supply of water from an extensive mossy tract called the Lachlan Swamp—a kind of huge natural sponge—which lies midway between the city and the shores of Botany Bay, towards which its natural drainage is directed. But a tunnel of two miles length carries its waters into the town, and its outer limits have, within a recent period, been fenced round, to preserve it from the inroads of cattle. The lighting and paving of the streets of Sydney, with occasional exceptions, is exceedingly defective, and the sewerage still worse: many of the drains are on the surface, and become during dry weather mere reservoirs for the accumulation of filth. The immense number of dogs that infest the streets are one of the nuisances of the place; goats (which are maintained almost universally by the lower classes) are nearly as numerous, and as great a plague.

The streets of the Australian capital are crowded with vehicles of all kinds—many of them equipages of the gayest description, in which the wealthier classes enjoy their drive, during the cool hours of the evening, towards the “South Head” (the headland which stands at the southern entrance of Port Jackson), or in other places of fashionable resort. We have already referred to the number of horses reared in the colony; almost all classes ride, and vast numbers of the citizens of Sydney maintain vehicles of some description or other—gigs, barouches,

dog-carts, phaetons, and carriages of every imaginable form and kind. The vast number of auction-rooms is one of the noticeable features of the town. Indeed, a very large share of the ordinary business of the place is transacted at them: there are auctions of every description going forward at all times—auctions for the sale of sheep-runs and stock, books, furniture, houses, shipping stores, and every kind of produce. These are places for the inexperienced stranger to beware of, if he value the safety of his purse. The people of Sydney are shrewd drivers of bargains, and by no means scrupulous about the character of their transactions, so long as they result in a profitable return.

Society at the antipodes is composed of heterogeneous materials, and the newly-arrived emigrant requires to exercise a careful discretion before he surrenders himself to its enchantments. In Sydney there is the display of wealth and luxury on every side,—combined, in not a few instances, with a successful career of vice and profligacy, and with the most utter disregard of every moral restraint. The stranger will here do well to reverse in practice that maxim of British jurisprudence which holds every person to be esteemed innocent until he shall have been legally proved guilty. In Sydney, on the other hand, it is scarcely going beyond the bounds of justice to say, that every one may be regarded as a rogue until he shall have proved his title to be considered an honest man! How, indeed, should it be otherwise? Up to the end of 1836 nearly a hundred thousand convicts—the worst off-scum of British crime and degradation—had been sent to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. No wonder that their

taint has entered fully into its society, and even penetrated to its heart's core !

But the moral atmosphere of New South Wales has vastly improved of late years, and will continue to improve in an accelerated ratio now that its fertile pastures, and the shores of its magnificent harbours, are no longer made the receptacle of criminals, while the attractions of its gold mines are drawing free emigrants thither in a rapid and continuous stream. There are still (and will, for some time to come, continue to be) class-distinctions in the social circles of its capital, where the free emigrants hold themselves aloof—in so far as the intercourse of *private life* is concerned—from the emancipists, or those who originally visited the colony under penal sentences, and many of whom are now among its wealthiest and most influential citizens. But this distinction between the “free” and the “freed” is gradually becoming weakened, and with the growth of another generation will have altogether disappeared.

Since 1842 all the large towns in the colony have been incorporated. Sydney has now its mayor, aldermen, and town-councillors, and there are similar dignitaries at Bathurst, Paramatta, Goulburn, and other places of local importance.

Lawyers are an extremely numerous class in Sydney, and find ample occupation for their professional abilities in the litigious propensities of its inhabitants, and the frequent changes of property which always take place among the members of a speculative commercial community. In the Swan River settlement, on the other hand, we are told that lawyers are not only unable to thrive, but absolutely

find no occupation—nothing whatever to do; and the last of the race accordingly, some time since, abandoned the place in despair!

“O fortunati, sua bona si norint”

—these lawyer-less (and yet not lawless) Swan River colonists!

Sydney is the epitome of the entire wealth of New South Wales: it represents the manufactures as well as the trade of the colony. In the outskirts of the town are seen numerous tall chimneys belonging to the flour-mills that are worked by steam power; besides windmills, water-mills, and horse-mills, all employed in grinding and dressing grain. There are also the extensive boiling-down establishments referred to in a previous chapter. And among the various manufactories there are distilleries, breweries, sugar-refineries, soap and candle works, tobacco and snuff mills, tanneries, places for salting and preserving meat, together with gas-works, glass-houses, iron and brass foundries, and woollen-cloth works. At the latter, a considerable quantity of excellent tweed-cloth—in very general use throughout the colony—is made. Ship-building is extensively carried on at many of the smaller coves and creeks around the shores of Port Jackson.

Nearly a thousand vessels enter Port Jackson annually, and the accommodations for the reception of shipping are on the most extensive scale. Vessels of large burden can come close beside the wharfs, where there is at all times deep water.

One of the chief public attractions of Sydney is “the Domain”—an extensive enclosure situated to the eastward of

the city, and lying along the picturesquely-indented waters of Port Jackson,—which was wisely set apart (during the rule of Governor Macquarie) for the recreation of the citizens of the southern metropolis. It contains several hundred acres of land, tastefully laid out in public walks and drives, which are alternately cut through the native scrub and amidst the richest woodland scenery, or wind either along the edge of the high cliffs or by the margin of the glittering waters. For the taste and success with which art is here called in to the aid of nature, the colonists are in great measure indebted to the lady of Governor Macquarie, under whose directions the various walks were planned. At one spot, in the side of a rock which overhangs the romantic beach, is a seat still distinguished as Lady Macquarie's chair, from the circumstance of its having been her favourite resting-place while the surrounding works were in progress. Adjoining the Domain is the Botanic Garden, in which are collected specimens of the vegetation of almost every climate and country. The colonists look upon these gardens as “the Eden of Australia,” and there is certainly much in their varied and romantic aspects to warrant the appellation. In one part of them, near the sea-shore, is a small artificial pool, encircled by weeping willows, in the centre of which rises an obelisk erected to the memory of Allan Cunningham, the botanist and traveller, who acted for a long period as their superintendent.

The country in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney, for many miles inland, is sandy, barren, and of dreary aspect. A short distance to the southward are the Surrey Hills, covered with white drift sand, which is plentifully

distributed on the surface of the surrounding soil. But along the shores of Port Jackson a more varied scenery is found, and the drive to Paramatta—a small town situated at the head of that estuary, and at a distance of about fourteen miles from Sydney—is by no means devoid of interest. Paramatta contains upwards of 6,000 inhabitants, ranking second in population to the capital. It possesses some manufactories in which the kind of cloth that bears its name is made. But Paramatta is a dull and sombre place, though its streets are well laid out, and their shops by no means indifferently stocked. The governor of the colony has a country residence here, and a continual traffic—both by land and water—is maintained with Sydney. The houses in Paramatta are mostly detached, with gardens and shrubberies in front of and around them.

Among other towns in the colony, some of the principal are Liverpool, twenty miles to the west by south of Sydney, on the banks of a stream that falls into Botany Bay—Campbeltown, at a further distance to the south-west, on the river Hawkesbury—Goulburn, in the district of Argyle, upwards of a hundred miles to the south-west of Sydney—with Newcastle and Maitland, in the Hunter's River district. All of these, besides many of smaller size, are situated within the coast district of New South Wales, or to the eastward of the dividing range of mountains.

The district of Illawara, lying on the coast about sixty miles to the southward of Sydney, is an extremely fertile agricultural tract, but suffers from the want of good land-communication with the capital. It yields a considerable quantity of farm produce, including eggs, butter, cheese, and poultry, some of which is supplied to the Sydney

markets. The only town—or rather village—which it contains is Wollongong, a small place, with no more than six or seven hundred inhabitants.

The most considerable town in the inland division of the colony, or to the westward of the Blue Mountains, is Bathurst, situated on the left bank of the river Macquarie, at a direct distance from Sydney of 100 miles, in the direction of W.N.W. Bathurst was until lately only a small place, with four or five thousand inhabitants; but it has become the centre of the gold-mining operations of New South Wales, and has no doubt largely increased its population in consequence. The communication between Bathurst and the capital is maintained by means of the magnificent road across the mountains, of which mention has already been made.

The roads in New South Wales are generally good—at least in all the older parts of the colony—thanks to the abundant supply of convict labour at the disposal of the government. Many of the road-side inns—with the old-fashioned horse-trough (here made out of the hollowed trunk of a tree) in front, and the tall sign-post to indicate their presence to the approaching traveller, pleasantly remind the English wanderer of home—telling of a time when road-side associations were of more varied and interesting character than they have become in the present age of locomotive engines and railway stations. On all the more frequented roads inns are sufficiently numerous, and their accommodation in general respectable. In the more distant interior, the traveller has to rely for shelter and refreshment upon the occasional log-hut of the squatter, and almost uniformly meets with entertainment which is

ungrudgingly and cheerfully bestowed. Hospitality is, indeed, one of the virtues of "the bush."

In the earlier days of the colony—and, indeed, until within a comparatively recent period—travelling in New South Wales was not unattended with the danger arising from marauding parties of bush-rangers, generally escaped convicts, and men of the most desperate character. The homestead of the settler was frequently plundered, and crimes of personal violence not seldom committed, by bands of these "knights of the road,"—the banditti of the colony—who often defied the pursuit of justice for a period of many years. But the days of bush-ranging are completely gone by in the elder colony, though in Van Diemen's Land they still prevail to some extent. By the aid of the excellent mounted police of New South Wales, the leaders of these gangs were successively hunted down and captured, and with the cessation of convict-influx there is no fresh material whence they are likely to be readily recruited—unless the attractions of the gold mines, and the evil passions likely to be roused into action amongst the motley assemblage of diggers, should in some measure serve to supply their place.

The eastern portion of New South Wales has been divided into forty-six counties. But these only extend to a distance of about 150 miles inland, and embrace but a very small proportion of the entire area of the colony. These "settled" districts (as they are termed) comprise about 35,500 square miles, or upwards of 20,000,000 acres; and beyond the boundaries the squatters have extended their runs over fully 100,000,000 acres. The returns made to government in the year 1849 gave to New

South Wales 97,000 horses, 1,366,000 head of horned cattle, and 6,530,000 sheep. The latter have since increased to upwards of 8,000,000. The imports amounted, in the year 1850, to a value exceeding 2,000,000*l.* sterling, and the exports to nearly 2,400,000*l.* The general revenue of the province, in the same year, amounted to 277,800*l.*, and the Crown revenue (arising chiefly from the sale or rental of land) to upwards of 123,000*l.*; whilst the expenditure was little more than 250,000*l.*

The articles imported from Sydney into the port of London, in the year 1850, consisted of wool, 51,676 bales; tallow, 11,259 casks; sperm oil, 1,438 casks; black oil, 1,183 casks; leather, 197 bales; hides, 43; wheat, 109 quarters; copper-ore, 408 tons; and copper, 2025 ingots. The total value of these amounted to 1,282,849*l.* The grand total of London imports from all the Australasian colonies (including New Zealand), in that year exceeded 3,330,000*l.*

The quantity of oil and whalebone exported from the colony has been somewhat on the decline for several years past, owing to the fact of an extensive export being now made from the ports of New Zealand and other places, instead of the produce of the fishery being sent to Sydney for shipment, as was formerly the case. The whale-fishery is, however, still largely carried on from Sydney and other ports on the eastern coast of Australia, and constitutes an important branch of colonial industry.

CHAP. XIV.

VICTORIA.—Origin of the Colony.—The First Settlers.—Its Population.—Line of Coast.—Inland Features.—Mountains.—Rivers.—Climate.—Trade.—Melbourne.—Geelong.—Portland Bay.—Gipps's Land.

THE present colony of Port Phillip—or Victoria, as it is now officially designated—was until 1850 only a portion of New South Wales. It is the latest, and the most flourishing, of all the Australian provinces; and has grown into a colony entirely by force of its own inherent capabilities, with no aid of companies at home, fostered by no advocates of particular theories of colonisation, and without putting the mother country to the expense of a single shilling on its account. On the contrary, Port Phillip has always exhibited a surplus of revenue over expenditure, and before its separation from New South Wales contributed largely towards the funds raised by the elder province.

The origin of Port Phillip is curious and instructive; it constitutes an honourable tribute to the energy and perseverance of our countrymen, and shows strikingly of how sterling a material the Anglo-Saxon race is composed, and how strong is the power of adaptation to circumstances which its members everywhere manifest.

An attempt was made by the English government to establish a settlement on the shores of Port Phillip as early as 1803, but without success, the officer in command of the expedition not finding a place which appeared to him possessed of the requisite advantages for permanent occu-

pation. What a government expedition failed in doing, however, the colonists of Van Diemen's Land accomplished—mainly by the efforts of a few enterprising individuals, at a period of thirty-two years later. The magnificent inlet of Port Phillip had been discovered, and partially surveyed, by Captain Flinders, in the year 1802; and, from the date of the first establishment of the Van Diemen's Land settlement, its shores had from time to time been occasionally visited by escaped convicts, runaway seamen, and others—as well as by the crews of whaling vessels that had put in there for shelter from the heavy south-west winds which prevail in Bass's Strait. These casual visitors of Port Phillip reported the good qualities of the harbour and adjacent country to the colonists of Van Diemen's Land, and an occasion soon arose which made the latter feel desirous of availing themselves of these advantages. In 1835, land, which had previously (in all the Australian colonies) been given away by the government, had for the first time a minimum price attached to it, and was for the future only to be attainable by purchase; wool had advanced in value, stock risen in price, and the settlers were anxious to find means of extending their sheep-runs. The system of issuing depasturing licences had not then been commenced by the government. At this period, an enterprising colonist of Van Diemen's Land, a Mr. Batman, proceeded to Port Phillip, and negotiated with the natives for the purchase of an extensive tract of country, the consideration specified to be given by the purchaser being a certain number of knives, scissors, tomahawks, looking-glasses, blankets, and similar articles. The government, however, very properly refused to recognise

the validity of the transaction, and the whole tract of country adjoining Port Phillip was shortly afterwards taken possession of on behalf of the Crown. But the way to it had been opened up by Mr. Batman and his companions, and, when once its advantages for the purpose of sheep-farming had become known, other settlers from Van Diemen's Land soon followed his example, carrying their flocks thither across the intervening channel of Bass's Strait. The New South Wales squatters, meanwhile, poured down their flocks and herds from the northward, and the rich pastures of the province were speedily in progress of occupation. The holders of stations, whether as original squatters or otherwise, were allowed, under certain restrictions, to settle down quietly in the occupation of those tracts in which they had become accustomed to pasture their flocks.

The entire tract remained attached to the government of New South Wales (of which, indeed, according to the terms of the charter under which that colony had been formed, it properly constituted a portion), and was under the control of a superintendent appointed by the governor of the elder province, until the year 1850, when the increasing number and influence of its settlers led to its being erected into a separate province, and placed under a lieutenant-governor. Its entire history as a settlement is comprised within the brief period of seventeen years, within less than which time (up to the beginning of 1851) it had acquired a population of 77,000 persons; a number which is at the present moment, under the attractive influence of its lately-discovered golden treasures, increasing in a more rapid ratio than that of any of the other Australian settlements. For the last ten or

twelve years there has, indeed, been a continued stream of immigration into Port Phillip from the mother country, and especially of the wealthier class of settlers.

The province of Victoria embraces the south-eastern corner of the Australian continent. Its maritime frontier extends from Cape Howe westward to the longitude of 141° , comprising a coast line of nearly 700 miles' length. Its inland boundaries are formed by the course of the river Murray, and the line of the 141st meridian, which divide it respectively from the colonies of New South Wales and South Australia. The area comprised within these limits is 98,000 square miles, or nearly 63,000,000 acres, which contain a much larger proportion of fertile and available soil than any other portion of the Australian continent.

From Cape Howe, the Australian coast trends in a south-westerly direction for upwards of 200 miles, towards the high promontory of Cape Wilson (2350 feet above the sea), which constitutes the southern extremity of the mainland. The line of coast extending between these two headlands is known as the Long Beach; the portion of it which lies immediately to the west of Cape Howe is barren and inaccessible. A short distance to the northward of Cape Wilson is Corner Inlet, upon the shores of which the settlement of Alberton (or Port Albert) has been formed. The navigation of this inlet, like that of the adjacent coast, is somewhat dangerous; but it carries on considerable intercourse with Hobart Town, exporting thither the numerous fat cattle and sheep which are reared in the fine pastoral tract of adjoining country, to which the name of Gipps's Land has been given. Im-

mediately off Cape Wilson are several small and rocky islands, rising precipitously out of the deep, and manifestly forming part of a submarine prolongation of the great mountain-chain of Eastern Australia.

From Cape Wilson the coast assumes a north-westerly, and afterwards a westerly, direction. At the distance of between eighty and ninety miles beyond the Cape is Western Port—an inlet of some magnitude, with a long and narrow island fronting it to seaward; and a short distance further the magnificent land-locked bay of Port Phillip—whence the popular name of the whole territory is derived.

Port Phillip is entered by a narrow passage of a mile and a half across, and bounded on either hand by Points Nepean and Lonsdale; immediately beyond, it expands into a capacious and securely-sheltered basin, which measures upwards of thirty miles across in either direction, and in which ships may at all times ride in perfect safety. In fact, it resembles in appearance an immense lake rather than an arm of the sea, and is surrounded by a landscape of singular variety and beauty. On the eastern side, the coast is for some distance fronted by hills; but these give place, towards the upper part of the harbour, to a more undulating and softer scenery. On its western side, Port Phillip throws off an extensive arm, which forms the harbour of Geelong, and penetrates to some distance within the mainland.

Cape Otway—a bold headland, which rises majestically from the sea, and is densely covered to its summit with the rich, but sombre-coloured, native vegetation of Australia—forms a conspicuous object upon the southern coast

of this province, and is visible long before the voyager from the eastward comes within view of the entrance to Port Phillip, though situated at a distance of more than sixty miles to the south-west of that inlet. From Cape Otway the coast forms a bold sweep to the westward, enclosing the broad indentation of Portland Bay, along the extensive shores of which several flourishing settlements have been made. The western limit of Portland Bay is marked by Cape Nelson, a high promontory, to which succeeds Cape Bridgewater; and a short distance further west is the meridian which marks the frontier-line between the provinces of Victoria and South Australia.

The chain of mountains called the Australian Alps, which we have traced in a preceding chapter from the commencement of the range to its southward termination on the shores of Bass's Strait, imparts its most prominent natural features to the province of Victoria. The mountains spread over great part of the eastern division of the province, gradually sloping off upon their eastward face into beautifully undulated grounds, diversified by hills and valleys, and terminating towards the coast in a fine, open, and richly-watered plain, which, in its natural state, is covered with luxuriant grasses and timber. This tract of country, which extends to the south-eastward of the mountain-chain, stretching from the shores of Corner Inlet to the neighbourhood of Cape Howe, was first explored by Count Strzelecki, who gave it the appellation of Gipps's Land, in compliment to the then governor of New South Wales. Subsequent experience has confirmed the impressions of its discoverer in pronouncing it one of the finest portions of the Australian continent. Viewed from Mount

Gisborne (lat. $37^{\circ} 40'$), Gipps's Land resembles a semi-lunar amphitheatre, walled in from north-east to south-west by lofty and picturesque mountain-scenery, and opening to the south-eastward, where its widely-spread area slopes towards an uninterrupted expanse of ocean.

The country immediately adjoining Western Port, upon the other side of the mountain-chain, is of totally opposite character—an alternation of dense scrub and extensive marshes. From a tract called the Great Swamp, which is only divided from the waters of Western Port by a narrow belt of land four or five miles across, the river Latrobe flows to the eastward towards the coast lying between Corner Inlet and Cape Howe, interrupting by its course the general continuity of the dividing range of high ground.

The middle and western divisions of the province include a succession of hilly tracts, to different portions of which the names of the Pyrenees and the Grampians have been given. A hilly, undulating, and watered country fills up, in fact, the greater portion of the province, which almost uniformly exhibits a greater variety of surface—a more pleasing succession of hill and dale, of woodland and prairie, than any other portion of Australia. Upon their northward slopes, these hilly tracts are watered by streams which belong to the basin of the Murray, and on their southern side by rivers flowing directly towards the sea-coast, most of them falling either into Port Phillip or Portland Bay. Mount Alexander, one of the most prominent points of present interest in connection with the gold-digging operations, is situated at a direct distance of seventy miles from Melbourne (near the head of Port Phillip), in the direction of

north-west—the intervening country being covered throughout with detached groups of hills and insulated masses of high ground.

The course of the river Murray, which forms the northern frontier of Victoria, has been already described. Among numerous tributary streams which it receives from this province, are the Mitta-Mitta, Ovens, Goulburn, Loddon, and others. The Mitta-Mitta has its source in the Australian Alps, at a height of 1850 feet above the sea. In the tract adjacent to that whence it draws its waters is Lake Omeo—at an altitude of 3,100 feet—the rocks adjoining which have been found to consist of richly auriferous materials. The Loddon flows from the neighbourhood of Mount Alexander, another of the gold-bearing localities. All these streams, however, like the rivers of the Australian continent in general, become in great measure dried up during the summer, and are in many places converted into a mere chain of ponds—as the experience of the gold diggers, whose operations suffer materially under the deficient supply of water at that season, but too well testifies.

The river Yarra-Yarra*—one of those which belong to the southward slope of the hilly region—flows into the head of Port Phillip, and has the city of Melbourne, the capital of the province, on its banks. Its lower course is navigable for vessels not exceeding a hundred and fifty tons burthen, and for steamers of light draught, to a distance of eight miles inland—at which point Melbourne is situated. This portion of its channel lies between high and level

* That is, “flowing flowing,” in the meaning of the native language, because it preserves a perennial stream of water.

banks of soft mud, which terminate abruptly on the edge of the stream, and are overgrown with mangroves and other weedy vegetation. The stream winds lazily along its course, resembling in appearance rather a canal than a river. The tide rises at the mouth of the Yarra to a height of six or seven feet, its influence extending up to a short distance above Melbourne.

The river Glenelg, at the western extremity of the province, is one of the longest of the seaward streams: immediately above its mouth it crosses the line of the 141st meridian, and enters the sea at a point situated within the boundary of South Australia.

Nearly the entire province of Port Phillip lies in a more southern latitude than any other portion of the Australian continent, and consequently enjoys a milder temperature. Within the district adjoining the coast, the range of the thermometer is restricted within narrow limits, the difference between the mean of summer and winter being (at Melbourne) only sixteen degrees, and that between the hottest and coldest months of the year less than nineteen degrees. In its summer, Port Phillip resembles Baden, Marseilles, and Bordeaux; in its winter, Palermo, or Buenos Ayres: while the fluctuations of its temperature are those of the coasts of Cornwall and Devon, and its annual mean of temperature the same as that of Northern Italy or the south of France. The droughts which are so frequently the scourge of New South Wales are but rarely, if ever, experienced in this province.

In 1846, the district of Port Phillip (then only eleven years old) contained 32,800 inhabitants—a number which

the census of 1851 increased to 77,000, so that the population had considerably more than doubled within a period of five years. Agriculture is extensively pursued by many of the settlers, and in all parts of the province there are tracts well suited for the use of the plough. For the growth of wheat, maize, and potatoes, the country lying around Melbourne is unsurpassed by any part of Australia. But sheep-farming has hitherto constituted (and, the gold discoveries notwithstanding, is likely to continue so to do) the principal source of wealth to the settlers of Port Phillip, and the quantity of wool exported from this province has of late increased with wonderful rapidity. For the last few years, indeed, this colony has exported a greater quantity of wool than the older and more extensive province of New South Wales. Its pastures are uniformly of the richest description, and the wealthy squatters by whom they are occupied have availed themselves of these and other natural advantages to the fullest extent in their power. Indeed, more than three-fourths of the entire area of the province must already be under occupation as sheep and cattle-runs. - As in New South Wales, large numbers of stock are annually boiled down for tallow, which is exported chiefly to the London market, as well as some quantity of leather and hides.

The imports from Port Phillip (including Portland Bay) into London in the year 1850 comprised 53,145 bales of wool, and 8,557 casks of tallow, with 382 bales of leather and 3,705 hides; their total value amounting to 1,191,364*l*. This amount of produce relates, of course, to a period altogether prior to the discovery of the golden treasures which the province contains, and which have

swelled the value of its exports during the past year to an extraordinary sum.

The settled portions of Victoria have been divided into twenty-four counties, which embrace all the eastern and southern parts of the province. In the eastern half of the colony, the squatting stations extend far into the interior, towards the banks of the Murray, and at some points may probably have already reached that stream. The north-western angle of the province is as yet only partially explored, and the fine agricultural tract of Gipps's Land has hitherto been but scantily occupied.

Melbourne, the chief city of Victoria, lies along the northern bank of the Yarra-Yarra, eight miles above the point where that stream discharges its waters into Port Phillip. It is tolerably well laid out,—in so far, at least, as the principal streets are concerned; but the site is low, flat, and partially swampy. In almost any other part of the world, Melbourne (or any town so situated) would be a very unhealthy place; and even here there is at times a good deal of sickness, from dysentery, influenza, and other complaints. The supply of water, too, has hitherto been by no means good, though this is an evil readily admitting of remedy, since the Yarra-Yarra might be made to yield an excellent supply from a short distance above the town.

For a place which has been but seventeen years in existence—(it was founded in 1837, upon ground which was then tenanted only by the kangaroo and the emu, or by a few scanty tribes of blacks)—Melbourne has, however, a flourishing appearance, and has thriven wonderfully fast. It already contained 23,000 inhabitants, prior to the recent

immigration caused by the gold discoveries within the province. Like so many of the towns in the United States (and, indeed, like new towns "all the world over"), Melbourne has an unfinished, precocious, and upstart kind of aspect; but everything about it wears an air of progress, and there is the evidence of wealth and prosperous enjoyment, even if some of the humbler attributes of comfort be wanting. The Yarra-Yarra is spanned by a fine bridge of a single arch, which connects the city with its suburb of South Melbourne.

The recent absorption of all available labour in the "diggings" has made it impossible to provide a sufficiently increased accommodation, in the way of house-room, for the numerous immigrants who have been daily arriving for several months past, and vast numbers of them have found it requisite to dwell, for a time, in tents around the outskirts of the city. So that Melbourne exhibits at the present time a singular appearance, half camp and half town. The houses are mostly of brick covered with stucco: there are several churches, a Catholic cathedral, and numerous dissenting chapels, besides many public edifices on a scale of respectability. In the vicinity of the city, along the banks of the river, are several boiling-down establishments, the odours proceeding from which unpleasantly salute the olfactory nerves of the approaching stranger.

Melbourne is a bad shipping port; only small vessels can ascend to the town, the greater portion of the shipping being obliged to load and unload at William's Town, which is situated at the mouth of the stream, where it enters Hobson's Bay, as the northern extremity of Port Phillip is

called. William's Town is built on a low sand-flat ; it is an ugly looking place, and only exists by sufferance, as the port of Melbourne, with which it might be advantageously connected by a railway, the intervening country being perfectly flat.

Notwithstanding its proximity to the magnificent basin of Port Phillip, the shipping accommodations of Melbourne are, then, on a very inferior scale to those of Sydney—supreme in the possession of its splendid harbour, Port Jackson. On the north-eastern shore of Port Phillip, at a short distance from the mouth of the Yarra, are the villages of St. Kilda and Brighton, which serve as bathing-places for the citizens of Melbourne.

At the opposite extremity of Port Phillip, and at the head of Geelong or Coria Bay, is the town of Geelong, the second place in the colony in point of population and trade, and the rival of Melbourne during the period of its earlier years. Geelong has upwards of 7,000 inhabitants ; it is well laid out, amply supplied with water, and occupies a site which is in every respect superior to that of the capital. Even here, however, the larger ships are unable to reach the town, but discharge their cargoes at Port Henry, which is ten miles lower down the bay.

In a more western part of the province, on the shores of Portland Bay, are several thriving settlements. The town of Portland, near the western extremity of the bay, has extensive whaling establishments, and ships also a considerable quantity of wool, but its harbour is defective. Some distance to the eastward is Belfast (on a small inlet called Port Fairy), also an active seat of colonial industry. The settlement of Belfast is surrounded by the best agri-

cultural land in the western division of the province, and is famous for its butter and cheese. The vicinity of Portland Bay comprises, indeed, one of the finest portions of the colony, and is likely to rank hereafter among the most important of the settlements on the Australian coast. It shares fully in all the advantages of climate which belong to the seaward portion of Victoria—sheltered from the heated atmosphere of the northerly winds by the hilly country surrounding it in that direction, and open on the southward to the refreshing breezes of an ocean which extends in unbroken continuity to the southern pole. The tract of country lying between Portland Bay and Geelong is unsurpassed in Australia for richness of pasture, and is numerously occupied by the cattle of the settlers. The delightful aspect of this region, and the varied beauty of its scenery, led Sir Thomas Mitchell to bestow on it the appellation of *Australia Felix*, by which the entire province was long generally known.

Towards the opposite extremity of the province the port of Alberton (on the banks of a little river called the Albert, which flows into the northern entrance of Corner Inlet) serves as the chief outlet for the fine pastoral tract of Gipps's Land.

Between Melbourne and Sydney—the capitals of the most important of the Australian colonies—there has long existed an overland communication, originally opened up by the squatters of the elder province, and now continually traversed by vehicles of every description, and by all classes of passengers, either on foot or on horseback. The direct distance between the two cities exceeds 450 miles; by the road it is about 600. The whole way is thickly

studded with taverns, at frequent intervals between the numerous small towns and villages that occur on the route. The royal mail from Melbourne to Sydney departs twice a week, and runs the distance in six days.

The distance by sea between Melbourne and Sydney is greater than by land; but frequent communication is maintained by steamers, and the voyage is ordinarily accomplished within three days. Between Melbourne and Adelaide (the capital of South Australia) the intercourse was, until very recently, much less frequent, and was wholly confined to a sailing voyage from the one port to the other. But the sudden importance attained by the gold mines of Victoria has occasioned the necessity of a more direct intercourse between the adjoining provinces, and an overland route has lately been opened up between Adelaide and the auriferous deposits of the sister colony, and thence to the capital of the latter. This route is traversed in a period of five or six days.

CHAP. XV.

South Australia.—Its Natural Features.—Climate.—Minerals.—
Copper Ore.—The Burra Burra Mine.—Origin of the Colony.—
Its early Difficulties.—Adelaide.

THE colony of South Australia is situated to the westward of New South Wales and Victoria, and includes a considerable portion of the southern coast of the Australian continent. Its inland frontiers are wholly artificial, and are merely denoted on the maps by the lines of the

parallels and meridians. From its maritime frontier, on the southward, this province stretches into the interior as far as the latitude of 26° (the same parallel which marks the present northern limit of New South Wales); and in the direction of east and west it includes the space lying between the longitudes of 132° and 141° east of Greenwich. The area comprised within these widely-extended limits is about 300,000 square miles (or 192,000,000 acres), the settled portion of which, however, does not amount to a twentieth part of its entire extent. This portion lies chiefly in the neighbourhood of Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs, which form the most distinguishing features in the seaward division of the province. But a very small proportion of the land has been disposed of,—the great bulk of the territory being still in the possession of the Crown. Portions of the Crown lands are here, however, as in the adjacent colonies (though to a much smaller extent), held in occupation for pastoral purposes by means of license.

From the latest official returns, it appears that the total extent of surveyed land in the province of South Australia is 885,401 acres (or 1383 square miles), of which 634,006 acres (990 square miles) have been alienated by sale from the Crown. The Crown land occupied by squatters for pastoral purposes embraces 15,317 square miles. The maximum annual rent has been fixed at one and a half farthing per acre; the minimum being one half the above rent. The principal *settled* portions of the colony have been divided into eleven counties, of one of which, however, the exact limits are as yet undefined. The area of the ten defined counties embraces 14,282 square miles, or upwards of 9,000,000 acres.

The line of coast falling within the limits of South Australia exceeds 1400 miles in length, including the two extensive gulfs which occur about midway between its eastern and western extremities. St. Vincent's Gulf—the more easterly, and the smaller, of these—indents the land to a depth of about 100 miles, having at its entrance, off the headland of Cape Jervis, a breadth of forty miles. Cape Jervis forms the termination of a projecting neck of land which divides St. Vincent's Gulf from Encounter Bay, lying further to the eastward. Off the entrance of St. Vincent's Gulf is Kangaroo Island.

Spencer's Gulf is sixty miles across at its commencing portion (between Capes Spencer and Catastrophe), and stretches inland—narrowing as it recedes from the open sea—for a distance of 200 miles. The narrow neck of land which lies between Spencer and St. Vincent's Gulfs is called York Peninsula. Both of the gulfs have deep water throughout, and in most parts admit of safe navigation near the shore.

Those portions of South Australia which are situated in the vicinity of the gulfs above referred to (and which constitute almost the only portions of the province that have yet been occupied), exhibit a diversified surface. From Cape Jervis, at the eastern entrance of St. Vincent's Gulf, a range of high land stretches in a northward direction into the interior, lying in close proximity to the eastern shores of the gulf along its whole extent. Further to the northward, where it approaches the neighbourhood of Spencer's Gulf, this high tract forms two distinct ranges, which have been traced in the same northerly direction far into the interior—somewhat beyond the line of the thirtieth

parallel. The average altitude of this hilly tract is moderate, few even of the higher summits exceeding from two to three thousand feet above the level of the sea. Among the most conspicuous points are Mount Lofty (2,285 feet) and Mount Barker (1,681 feet), both situated to the south-eastward of the town of Adelaide — Mounts Arden and Brown (each 3000 feet), near the head of Spencer's Gulf — and Mount Serle, at a considerably greater distance in the interior.

In the more southern portion of the tract here referred to (that is, in the part adjoining the eastern shores of St. Vincent's Gulf), the hills are well grassed, and wooded to their summits, while the adjacent land is generally of the finest description, the soil being naturally fertile, and capable of producing rich crops of corn, fruits, and vegetables of every kind. In a few places along the coast the soil is thin, and the land covered with scrub. Upon the eastern side of the high ground a considerable tract of scrub extends towards the course of the river Murray, but between this and the base of the hills there are extensive tracts suited for sheep-runs, and there is also good land immediately adjacent to the banks of the river.

To the east of the upper portion of Spencer's Gulf, the hilly tract is also of generally fertile character. The hills are here rocky and precipitous on their western side, with deep ravines, bordered (as usual in Australia) by large gum-trees; and at their base are alluvial flats, or plains, covered with a fine silky herbage, intermixed with patches of kangaroo grass, and diversified at intervals by a fine flowering scrub. There is plenty of good water in this district during the season of winter, but in summer it can

only be had by digging. The ranges more to the eastward are also well wooded, and exhibit gum-trees of magnificent growth, while beyond lie extensive and richly grassed plains.

At a further distance to the northward the country changes for the worse; the hills diminish in height, and become more detached, with sterile valleys between, and water is of rare occurrence. Beyond Mount Hopeless (lat. $29^{\circ} 13'$), at which the eastern range of hills terminates, the country consists on every side of low stony plains, varied occasionally by sand, and interspersed with precipitous and flat-topped hillocks, from 50 to 300 feet high, and coated either with stones or with a sandy soil. These plains present the appearance of a table-land, washed smooth by the violent action of water, and in their present state — whether sandy or stony — are destitute alike of water, grass, and timber.

York Peninsula, which intervenes between Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs, is a level tract, great part of it covered with scrub, but with grassy plains at frequent intervals: in the latter there is a tolerable supply of fresh water. The whole peninsula is now divided into sheep-runs.

The country lying on the western side of Spencer's Gulf is known by the name of Eyre Land. It is a peninsular tract, bounded on the north by a chain of heights called the Gawler Range, which lies in the direction of east and west. The more northern portion of this district forms a table-land, with an average elevation of 1300 feet above the sea; its surface is traversed by short and narrow mountain ridges. To the south of this table-land the

country is low and undulating, but again becomes more hilly towards the southern extremity of the peninsula, which terminates in Cape Catastrophe, at the western entrance of Spencer's Gulf. In this hilly tract the elevations are from 600 to 1000 feet, with numerous watered and fertile valleys between, in many of which there is a rich alluvial soil. The harbour of Port Lincoln, situated on the western shore of Spencer's Gulf, near its entrance, and within the range of country here referred to, is one of the finest in the world.

The lower portion of the Murray—the largest river in Australia—lies within the limits of this province. It is a fine stream, with a considerable volume of water at all seasons of the year, but its advantages as a channel of commercial intercourse are much impaired by the want of a navigable entrance. Lake Alexandrina, through which it enters the sea, is (as noticed in a previous page) only a gigantic pond, and is shallow throughout.

With the exception of the Murray, South Australia does not contain a single stream entitled to the name of river. The Torrens—on the banks of which the capital, Adelaide, has been built—is during eight months of the year merely the dry bed of a creek, with a few detached pools of water at intervals; though during the winter rains it becomes swelled, for a brief period, into a powerful and impetuous stream. This insignificant watercourse is, in fact, about as unworthy the distinction of having the capital of a colony on its banks as can well be conceived. Fortunately, however, the inhabitants are enabled to procure abundance of good water, by means of wells, at all seasons.

The want of running water is severely felt in many

parts of South Australia, which is the driest and the dustiest of colonies. It is, nevertheless, free from the droughts of New South Wales, and the quantity of rain which falls annually is always sufficient for the purposes of the husbandman. During nine or ten months in the year the climate is in the highest degree agreeable, admitting of the pursuit of out-door occupations without any sensation of inconvenience from the heat. The sky is brilliantly clear, the air warm and glowing, and the weather almost uniformly fine. The only unpleasant season is during the heat of summer,—the period between December and February,—when the sun attains an excessive power, and occasional hot winds from the northward augment the naturally high temperature. The rains fall chiefly during the winter months, the mean which occurs annually being about twenty-one inches — with less variation in quantity than in most parts of Australia.

The vegetable and animal productions of South Australia exhibit no material difference from those of the adjacent colonies. The timber is chiefly of the genus *eucalyptus* (gum-tree—*toujours gum-tree*, as a late visitor to Australia remarks of the prominent characteristic of its woodland scenery). That known as the stringy bark is the kind most generally useful, on account of its easy splitting. It is well adapted for making fences, for roofing houses, and indeed for all kinds of building purposes. The red and white gums are also useful for building and for making furniture; and, although rather heavy, they are by no means ill-adapted for ship-building.

All the richer fruits of southern and middle Europe flourish in this province, equally as in other parts of

Australia. The grapes, figs, peaches, and oranges, are all of the most luxuriant growth. In fact, almost anything will grow in the Australian soil, provided only the most moderate amount of moisture can be obtained for its nutriment. A curious instance of its reproductive powers, in reference to one of the field-plants of our own country, is afforded in the case of the common thistle, which having accidentally (or, perhaps, in virtue of a patriotic desire on the part of some Scotch settler to transplant this favourite emblem of nationality to his adopted home in the southern hemisphere) become naturalised in the Australian soil, has spread to such an extent as to call for the serious attention of the colonial legislature, with a view to the adoption of some mode of checking the further progress of what threatens to become a serious evil. The proverbial truth that "ill weeds grow apace" is nowhere more fully exemplified (morally and socially, as well as botanically) than in Australia, and the common field-plants of our English or Scotch pastures and heaths become magnified into shrubs — and even trees — of giant growth, beneath the expanding powers of the Australian sun. An army of gigantic thistles — tall and sturdy as those of the American pampas — would prove no slight impediment in the way of the industrious cultivator of Southern Australia.

This colony is more strictly agricultural than any other of the Australian settlements, excepting Van Diemen's Land. A great deal of excellent wheat is grown and exported, and — next to copper ore — the produce of the soil constitutes the chief wealth of the province. The wheat of South Australia commands the highest price in the London market, and is also in high estimation at the Cape

and the Mauritius, to both of which places it is extensively supplied. The total quantity of land enclosed up to the present time is about 150,000 acres: there are 220 acres of vineyard, and about 1,600 acres of garden-ground. Up to the returns of 1851, the export of wheat and flour had for some years been annually on the increase, notwithstanding the additional consumption within the province caused by its rapidly increasing population. Probably the drain upon its industrial population, consequent on the attractions held out by the gold diggings of the neighbouring colonies, will be found to have injuriously affected the amount of its produce during the last twelve months. Sheep and cattle are also numerous reared, though to a much less extent than in the adjacent colonies: at the present time, South Australia contains considerably upwards of 1,000,000 sheep, and more than 120,000 head of cattle. Wool and tallow (the latter only to a limited extent) both enter into the list of its exports.

But the wealth of South Australia is chiefly mineral: it contains abundance of copper ore, the richest in the world, and yielding a metal of the finest description. The proportion of metal contained in the ore varies from 12 to as high as 70 per cent., and sometimes masses of pure copper, without a particle of alloy, are dug out of the ground. Nor is copper the only metallic product of the province. Lead, iron, manganese, tin, antimony, titanium, and quicksilver, have all been found. There are also a great variety of earthy minerals,—amongst them quartz, opal, chalcedony, tufa, jasper, and numerous kinds of clay; with mica, felspar, and several precious stones, as the beryl, tourmaline, and others.

The mountains which have been described in a preceding page as extending along the eastern shores of St. Vincent's Gulf, and thence northward to beyond the parallel of 33° , constitute the metalliferous region of South Australia. Both copper and lead are worked at various points along the range, the former to a greatly superior extent. The most productive of the mines is the Burra Burra, situated about ninety miles to the northward of Adelaide. The working of this mine was only commenced in 1845, and from that period to the close of 1850 — a term of only five years — the quantity of copper ore raised from it amounted to upwards of 56,000 tons (worth nearly three-quarters of a million sterling), no less than 18,690 tons having been obtained in 1850 alone. The Burra Burra ore contains from 30 to 70 per cent. of pure copper.

This great mineral deposit exhibits some peculiarities which distinguish it from the metallic formations of other countries. Although the Burra Burra miners speak of working on lodes, these are of a very different character from the copper lodes found among the primary rocks of Britain. In a great basin, formed within an amphitheatre of hills, an immense deposit of clay, the result of the decomposition of clay-slate, has taken place; and this, under conditions which cannot be well determined, has become also the reservoir for the reception of copper. "In all probability it was first deposited in the pure metallic state, a fine example of the electrotpe process of nature. During this process, the so-called veins spread themselves through the soft clay in various directions, in precisely the same manner as we may, by carrying the terminal wires of a voltaic battery into a mass of clay saturated with sulphate

of copper, form a curious arborescent mass. By the action of the oxygen contained in the water, this copper becomes oxidised by the slow process which gives rise to the very beautiful crystals of red oxide of copper, and from this state it passes into the blue and green carbonates, under the action of carbonic acid, the difference in the colour of the two arising from the quantity of water in combination."*

Malachite, which is a carbonate of copper, is found abundantly amongst the Burra Burra ore. The Australian malachite is fully equal in beauty and variety of colour to that of Russia, the specimens of which attracted so large a share of attention in the Great Exhibition of last year, and considerable quantities of it have been sent from the colony, to be employed in various forms of ornamental workmanship. Until lately all the Australian copper was sent to Swansea to be smelted, but extensive smelting establishments have now been erected within the colony. Upwards of a thousand people are employed at the Burra Burra mine, or rather *were* so until within the last few months, during which their number has probably been materially diminished for a time by the absorbing attractions of the "diggings," which have hitherto operated in an extremely injurious manner upon the industrial resources of South Australia.

The Burra Burra mine is worked by a company, the shares in which, originally sold at 5*l.*, have risen within the last two or three years to the extraordinary value of 220*l.*! Recently, however, under the influence of the prevailing

* "Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition, 1851 vol. ii p. 991.

gold mania, they were at one time depreciated to less than a quarter of this sum. Fortunate indeed are they who became their purchasers at so reduced a rate, for the depreciation can only be temporary, since Burra Burra copper will of necessity retain its inherent value, so long as copper continues to be required for the purposes of the useful and ornamental arts. Numerous other copper mines have been opened in the province, most of them by joint-stock companies; but their shares are nearly all at a discount, and not one of them has yet paid a dividend, while the lucky holders of Burra Burra shares have been in the yearly receipt of almost princely incomes.

Copper ore has been to South Australia what wool has been to the neighbouring colony of Victoria, the main, if not the only, source of its prosperity and rapid development of wealth. Up to 1845, when its mineral treasures were for the first time, and by mere accident, discovered, the colony was in a languishing state, and had altogether failed in fulfilling the expectations of those under whose auspices it had been originally founded. It was deeply in debt—the revenue yearly becoming less, while the expenditure had for some time gone on annually increasing—the majority of the early colonists were ruined, or their capital sunk in a manner which then appeared hopeless of return, and the entire settlement seemed on the verge of bankruptcy and ruin. But the copper ore turned the scale; the hopes of the colonists were revived, the attention of speculators in the mother country became aroused, mining companies were formed, fresh capital and labour speedily flowed in to recruit the apparently exhausted resources of the province, and since that period the progress of South Australia has

been equally rapid as that of the most flourishing of her sister colonies.

Copper constitutes by far the greater portion of the exportable value of South Australian produce, and will probably continue to do so. Some quantity of the ore is sent to India and China, but the larger proportion to the English market. The colony maintains considerable commercial intercourse with the British possessions in the East Indies, Mauritius, and the Cape of Good Hope, and also with the United States.

This colony was originally established under the auspices of a joint-stock association, the South Australian Company, who obtained a charter of incorporation from the British Parliament in the year 1835: the first emigrants arrived in the settlement in the course of the following year. It was to have been a model colony, established on novel principles, the main features of which were the concentration of the settlers within a limited locality by means of a high price attached, from the first, to the land; it being assumed (and correctly, in so far as that portion of the scheme went) that labourers and others possessed of only small means would thereby be precluded from becoming purchasers and owners of land, and that the capitalists would thus be always enabled to command a ready supply of labour in the colonial market. "Every capitalist going to the colony," said (or wrote) Mr. Wakefield, the parent of the scheme, "will know that his want of labour is sure to be supplied. He may take the number of servants he can employ along with him without cost, beyond the price of his land. What is far more important, he will be able to retain their services until others shall arrive to take their

places. In Canada, New South Wales, and other colonies, servants taken out by capitalists, under engagement for a fixed period, invariably quit their masters ; because, in all those colonies, every one can obtain land of his own for a mere trifle. South Australia will be the first colony combining plenty of labour with plenty of land." A consolatory and comfortable theory, no doubt, for those who can discover no higher object in colonisation than that of realising the largest returns for the employment of capital, and no less objectionable mode of accomplishing such a purpose than that of creating, upon the other side of the globe, a territorial aristocracy, with all the attendant evils which have been so long admitted as burthensome upon the people of the parent country !

Unfortunately, however, for the promoters of this model scheme of colonisation, speculators and land-jobbers went out, while labourers did not—at least not to the extent anticipated. Instead of engaging actively in the culture of the soil, the first settlers occupied themselves almost solely in land speculations. People bought land, sold it, and re-bought it. Capital merely changed hands, while nothing, or almost nothing, was produced from the soil. The colonists were too busy building a town, and speculating on the fluctuating value of their acres, to attend to agriculture. They were living almost solely on imported capital. So long as fresh settlers arrived, things appeared to go on flourishingly : everybody speculated, and everybody lived expensively. In 1841, five years after the colony had been founded, nine-tenths of the population were concentrated within the town of Adelaide, and only a few hundred acres of land were under cultivation.

The evil consequences of this state of things were increased by the lavish expenditure of the local government, which served, for a time, to swell the outward semblance of prosperity. But the home authorities found it requisite to interpose a check, and the drafts of the governor on the British treasury were dishonoured, and returned to the colony unpaid. A crisis had arrived, and the bubble was on the point of bursting; the public debt of the colony already reached the large sum of 400,000*l.*; and in 1842, out of the 2000 houses which Adelaide contained, 650 were totally deserted in the course of the year, and numerous writs of insolvency passed through the Sheriff's Court. But the colonists were at length (after the utter ruin of many who were at first among the most sanguine) awakening from their dream. The opportune arrival, overland, of the flocks and herds of New South Wales, had helped to save them from absolute famine. Gradually more land was brought into cultivation, the rearing of stock encouraged, and the public expenditure of the colony very materially curtailed; the Burra Burra copper did the rest; and South Australia contained, in 1851, a thriving population of 67,000 persons—the great majority of them emigrants from the British Islands.

The local authorities of South Australia have recently offered a reward of 1000*l.* for the discovery of a gold field, capable of being profitably worked, within the province, with the view of checking the prevalent disposition on the part of a large number of the colonists to abandon their ordinary occupations for the allurements of the neighbour-

ing gold diggings. This measure may, perhaps, not be impolitic, under the present circumstances of excitement; but those who really desire the continued prosperity of South Australia, and who reflect on the almost invaluable mineral resources she is already known to possess, can hardly desire seriously that gold should be added to the list. Her copper alone is enough to maintain, and increase, her solid prosperity for years—probably for ages—yet to come; and in the train of the more glittering metals there follow a host of social and moral evils from which she is, as yet, happily exempt. Burra Burra against “the diggings,” therefore, say we; and our faith is stronger in the former than in the latter of these competitors, in the long run. The discovery of coal would be of more solid value than that of gold; for South Australia is wanting in that useful mineral, the presence of which *in situ* would be of material service in the aid of her smelting-works, and other mining establishments.

The city of Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is situated at a distance of four miles from the eastern shores of St. Vincent's Gulf, on the banks of the Torrens. The greater number of the buildings are to the southward of the river (or, rather, the river's bed, for the Torrens is nearly dried up during great part of the year), and are well laid out. The streets are wide and straight, and both the shops and private dwelling-houses numerous and well-built. Adelaide contains—or did so, before the news of the gold diggings had led a large number of its population to migrate to Port Phillip,—15,000 inhabitants.

We have described South Australia as the driest and

the dustiest of provinces, and its capital admirably epitomises its character in this respect. Adelaide is the dustiest and most fly-tormented of cities. Both evils must be endured by the settler, though sorely to the cost of his patience. As for the insect portion of the plague, they get into the eyes, and cause ophthalmia—they cover everything eatable, and you swallow them almost by wholesale during the enjoyment of your meals—while the mosquitoes buzz around you during the night, and mercilessly exact their sanguineous tribute from beneath your skin. After all, the splendid climate of Australia has its drawbacks, and the much-reviled atmosphere of our moist and misty island-home, if wanting in the more glowing charms of southern lands, is not without its compensating immunities!

A good road connects the capital with Port Adelaide—situate on an inlet of the gulf, at a distance of eight miles to the north-west. The colonists talk, and have been doing so for some time past, of laying down a railway between Adelaide and the port, for doing which the intervening ground offers every facility, and which would doubtless (when the present gold mania shall have in some degree subsided) command considerable traffic. The commercial activity of the people of Adelaide is very great, and their city presents, in general, a scene of busy occupation—numerous vehicles continually passing and re-passing on the road to the port, along the wharfs of which abundance of produce lies in readiness for shipment. But lately the town has been more than half deserted—the shops closed—and “Off to the Diggings” written in prominent and unmistakable characters upon the entire head and front of the place.

At about the same distance from the capital as Port Adelaide, but in the direction of south-west, is the village of Glenelg, on the shores of Holdfast Bay, as that portion of the gulf is called. The entire coast which lies to the southward of Adelaide, as far as the shores of Encounter Bay, and thence in a south-easterly direction as far as the frontier of Victoria, is already occupied by the colonists, besides an extensive range of country stretching from Adelaide to the northward, in the direction of the principal mines. New townships and villages have of late years sprung into existence throughout these portions of the colony, especially in the neighbourhood of the mines. Koorunga, near the Burra Burra mine, already contains 5000 inhabitants, with several churches, schools, inns, and various shops and stores.

Gawler, twenty-five miles to the north by east of Adelaide, is a small and thriving town. About the same distance from Adelaide to the eastward is the pretty little village of Hahnsdorf, situated in a valley which lies amongst the Mount Barker range of hills, and populated by an industrious colony of Germans, most of them natives of Hanover, who found here a refuge from the political storms and religious persecutions of their native land. They supply the capital with a great deal of excellent dairy produce. All these portions of the colony, for a considerable distance from Adelaide, in every direction, have an air of thriving ease and contentment, and are tenanted by an industrious agricultural population. In the country about Mount Barker, and thence to the eastward, there are numerous good sheep and cattle stations,

though on a much smaller scale than in the great squatting districts of the other colonies.

Port Lincoln, on the south-western shore of Spencer's Gulf, in a more distant portion of the colony, is admirably adapted for the purposes of commerce. A good deal of the land in its neighbourhood has been advantageously brought into culture, and the surrounding district is fast increasing in population and importance.

Kangaroo Island, which lies off the entrance of St. Vincent's Gulf, is of considerable size—ninety-six miles long by twenty-three in average breadth, excepting towards its eastern extremity, which forms a peninsula only connected with the other portion of the island by a very narrow neck of land. Its interior forms a high table-land, mostly covered with scrub, in the centre of which are several small lakes, both of salt and fresh water. There are rather more than a hundred settlers on the island, who are mostly resident at different points along the coast, and whose subsistence is derived from the cultivation of the soil, with fishing, and hunting seals; there are, besides, a few sheep stations. The village of Kingscote, on the shores of Nepean Bay, upon the north-east coast of the island, is the principal settlement. The scenery around Kingscote is very beautiful, and the air extremely healthy.

The entire number of aborigines within the province of South Australia does not exceed from three to four thousand. Many of them are employed in the service of the settlers as shepherds and stock-keepers, and a few as household assistants. Some of them also render casual assistance as reapers during the period of harvest.

There are altogether about eight thousand Germans in

the colony; they make good colonists—plodding, persevering, and industrious. In the town of Adelaide, amongst a motley assemblage of the people of various nations, there are a few Chinese, who are here, as elsewhere, quiet, steady-going, and money-making fellows.

CHAP. XVI.

Western Australia.—The Swan River Settlement.—Features of the Country.—Slow Progress of the Colony.—King George's Sound.—Natural Capabilities of Western Australia.—Employment of Convict Labour.

THE poorest and least important of the Australian colonies is that planted on the banks of the Swan River, upon the coast of Western Australia, in the year 1829. The Swan River Settlement (as it is popularly called) embraces the south-western corner of Australia, or that portion of the continent which is to the southward of the 30th parallel and to the west of the meridian of 120°. Besides the tract immediately adjoining the Swan, it includes the country in the neighbourhood of Cape Leeuwin, and the south coast thence to King George's Sound.

In a more extensive sense, Western Australia comprehends all the western half of the Australian continent, from the meridian of 129° to the shores of the Indian Ocean; an immense territory, ranging along a coast-line of perhaps not less than four thousand miles. But the far greater portion of this is unexplored—its interior altogether unknown; and the only part over which the settlement

has hitherto extended is that embraced within the narrower limits above specified.

Ranges of high ground appear to extend along the maritime portion of Western Australia, in the same general direction as those which line the eastern shores of the continent, but their elevation is nowhere so great. In the neighbourhood of the Swan River they bear the name of the Darling Range, which runs parallel with the coast, and at a distance of from fifteen to twenty miles inland. The hills which compose the Darling Range rarely exceed 2000 feet in altitude, though a few peaks are upwards of 3000 feet. They present a tame and monotonous aspect, altogether wanting in the boldness of outline which belongs to the mountain chains of Eastern Australia.

Between the hill ranges and the sea the soil is generally poor and barren, though interspersed with occasional tracts of more fertile description. These become more numerous at a further distance from the coast, and in the neighbourhood of the higher grounds there are extensive portions of country well adapted for pastoral purposes. But the fertile region terminates at a distance of about a hundred miles inland, beyond which the country seems altogether sterile—the plains which stretch thence towards the interior of the continent constituting, in so far as they have been explored, a mere parched and arid desert.

The rivers of Western Australia are of similar character to those found in other portions of this thirsty and comparatively ill-watered continent. They are for the most part mere surface drains, flooded during heavy rains, but not supplied from any perennial sources. In regard to running streams, indeed, this colony is worse off than any

of the Australian settlements. It has no river to be compared in volume of water with the Murray, or with the Hunter, the Hawkesbury, and others of the coast rivers of Eastern Australia. Even Swan River—the principal stream of the colony, and upwards of 180 miles in length of channel—is a mere torrent, subject at times to sudden and tremendous floods, but little better than a chain of ponds during great part of the year.

Good coal is found in the neighbourhood of Swan River, and is worked to a limited extent by the settlers. Some lead mines are also worked. Traces of both iron and copper have also been observed, and cinnabar is found in some places on the surface of the ground. A further knowledge of the capabilities of the settlement would probably show that its mineral wealth, if not equal to that of the other colonies on the Australian continent, is at any rate far from inconsiderable.

The progress of Western Australia has been slow, compared with that of the other Australian colonies. At the present time, nearly a quarter of a century after its first establishment, its population is less than ten thousand; while within a much shorter period the flourishing colonies of Victoria and South Australia—each containing its sixty or seventy thousand inhabitants—have sprung into existence. But the difficulties experienced by the early settlers on the banks of the Swan gave a check to the well-being of the colony from which it has never recovered: many of them abandoned the settlement in disgust—all, in fact, who could find the means of doing so—proceeding, chiefly, either to New South Wales or to Van Diemen's Land, and emigration from the mother

country to Western Australia was for a long time altogether at a stand. Latterly, however, it has been resumed, though on a limited scale, and the prospects of the settlement are decidedly improved.

The industry of the colonists is chiefly directed to pastoral pursuits. There are about 150,000 head of sheep within the settlement, and about 12,000 cattle. But the pasture grounds are for the most part inferior in natural capabilities to those of Eastern Australia; the herbage is generally poor and scanty, and in some of the interior districts there prevails a plant which is injurious to the flocks. Wool, however, has always constituted the chief article of export from the colony. Sheep and bullocks, and also potatoes, are exported from Western Australia to Singapore and the Mauritius, with both of which places an active traffic is maintained. Sandal-wood is abundant in the colony, and is extensively supplied to the markets of India and China. There are several other descriptions of valuable timber, particularly a tree known as the jarrah, which is well adapted for ship-building.

The most important parts of the colony are those in the immediate neighbourhood of Swan River, on the west coast, and King George's Sound, on the south. The seat of government is Perth, situated on the northern bank of Swan River, at a distance of nine miles from the sea. Perth is, however, an unimportant place, and one of the smallest of capitals. Below the town the Swan discharges itself into an estuary called Melville Water, at the mouth of which, behind a little promontory of limestone, is Freemantle, the principal port of the settlement, and the seat of the lately-formed convict-establishment. Melville

Water is navigable for some distance inland, but its entrance is obstructed by rocks. Ships are enabled, however, to discharge their cargoes at Freemantle in safety, by means of a jetty.

Guildford and York are small places in the interior, the former on the banks of the Swan, a few miles above Perth, the latter at a greater distance inland, on the channel of the Avon, as the upper portion of Swan River is called. Upon the coast of Geographe Bay, some distance to the southward of Swan River, a settlement called Australind was established, under the auspices of a London company, about ten or twelve years since, but apparently without any very prominent results.

King George's Sound, on the southern coast of Australia (about 180 miles to the eastward of Cape Leeuwin), is a fine bay, surrounded on three sides by hills. At the western extremity of the sound, it communicates by a narrow entrance with an inner and almost land-locked harbour, to which the name of Princess Royal Harbour is given. Upon the shores of this, at the foot of two granite hills, is the little town of Albany, the principal place in this portion of the colony. Between King George's Sound and Spencer's Gulf (within the province of South Australia), along a range of coast which exceeds 1200 miles in length, there are no harbours, nor any safe place of resort for shipping, and the land near the shore appears to be uniformly barren. This long extent of sterile and uninhabitable coast forms a complete barrier of separation between the settled portions of Western Australia and the other provinces of the "great south land."

The natural capabilities of Western Australia are certainly inferior to those of other Australian settlements, but

not to an extent sufficiently great to account for its slow rate of progress. There can be no doubt that the colony possesses resources much greater than have hitherto been developed. It has, besides, advantages of position which do not belong to other parts of Australia; it is nearer to England than any other portion of the Australian coasts, and possesses superior facilities for intercourse with India, China, and the trading communities of the Eastern Archipelago. Moreover it fully shares in the advantages of climate which belong to this portion of the globe, and is perhaps, on the whole, possessed of higher advantages in this respect than the other Australian provinces.

Yet, beyond the occasional visit of the few merchant ships trading thither, or of one of the whaling vessels engaged in the adjacent seas, the Swan River settlement has for many years remained almost isolated from the rest of the world, and is passed comparatively unheeded amidst the rush of emigration to the neighbouring colonies of the Australian continent. This has been mainly owing to the evil impression regarding it which went abroad during its earlier years, and which resulted from the unforeseen difficulties and disappointments which the first settlers met with. Even to the present day, Swan River has never lost the character which it thus acquired, and there is nowhere to be found a more complete example of the truth embodied in the popular adage regarding the consequences which ensue from the giving "a bad name" to a well-known domestic quadruped. The Swan River settlement, however, has got a very much worse reputation than it deserves, and there is nothing inherent in its resources or condition which should prevent its becoming,

even yet, a flourishing and important dependency of the British empire.

The chief difficulty of the Swan River settlers has all along been that inherent to early colonists—want of a sufficient supply of labour. Immense grants of land were made to the original settlers, many of whom were persons possessed of considerable property,—grants which varied in extent from 5,000 to 100,000 acres, and which it was altogether impossible that they could find any means of occupying to advantage in so young a community. The promoters of the scheme appear to have forgotten the obvious truth, that land only acquires value in proportion as labour is bestowed upon it; and that, in the absence of labour to bring them into culture, these thousands of acres of waste soil were utterly worthless to their owners. Labour was scantily supplied, and a long period elapsed before anything was produced from the soil. Everything required for the subsistence of the settlers had to be imported, and at immense cost. In fact, every difficulty—short of actual starvation, which more than once impended—was experienced. All the available land (and even much more than was capable, at the time, of being made available) was portioned out among the wealthier settlers, while the more industrious portion of the emigrants—the *producing* class, and those in general whose means were limited,—had little chance of obtaining a permanent interest in the soil, excepting in portions removed a considerable distance from the coast. Many of them, in consequence, left the settlement, while those who remained found their exertions completely paralysed, and their means exhausted by the continual import of fresh stock, and

of articles of consumption of every description. All these, moreover, had to be brought by sea—the immense distance of Swan River from the eastern side of the Australian continent precluding the possibility of that over-land intercourse with the older colony which has proved so advantageous in the cases of South Australia and Port Phillip.

At the present time, Western Australia is in want both of capital and labour, and without the influx of these there appears little chance of its becoming a flourishing settlement. Rather more than two years since, it was determined by the home government (in accordance with the wishes of the colonists themselves) to send convicts thither; a measure which will not, perhaps, be without partial benefit to an impoverished and scanty community, both on account of the official expenditure to which it leads, and of the introduction of labour by which it is accompanied. About five hundred convicts have already been sent, and employed chiefly upon public works, as the making of roads, &c., many of which were much needed. Others have been employed in various in-door avocations, or in following their respective trades as blacksmiths, masons, carpenters, tailors, &c. The gratuitous assignment of convicts to individual settlers for employment in their service—so extensively pursued in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land—has not been acted on in the case of the Freemantle establishment, and is perhaps wisely avoided. But the prisoners become entitled, by good conduct, to the privilege of a ticket-of-leave, and may then hire themselves to such of the settlers as are willing to engage their services. The least insubordination or misconduct is severely punished, by summary conviction

before a magistrate, at the instance of the employer. The evils of this system of convict-service are, however, inherent, and all past experience has shown that it too frequently proves, in the hands of a capricious and tyrannical master, only a modified form of slavery; and white slavery is quite as bad as black — perhaps, indeed, worse. The distance of Swan River from the other Australian settlements renders it unlikely that any intercourse can be maintained between them of a character calculated to awaken alarm on the part of the Anti-Transportationists of those more populous and advanced communities.

There are not more than about 1500 natives within the settled portions of Western Australia. A few of them are employed by the whites, with whom they appear to have been, for the most part, upon generally better terms of understanding than their coloured brethren in the other parts of Australia.

CHAP. XVII.

Van Diemen's Land. — Its Area. — Natural Features. — Mountains. — Rivers. — Geological Formation. — Minerals. — Climate. — Natural Productions. — Forest Trees. — Native Animals. — The Aborigines.

THE large island of Tasmania, or Van Diemen's Land — which lies to the southward of Australia, and is separated from it by the channel of Bass's Strait — is only a fourth part less than Ireland in magnitude. It measures 180 miles in the direction of north and south, and about 160 in average breadth, and includes an area of 24,000 square miles.

Upon every side, the coasts of Van Diemen's Land

present bold and rugged promontories to the ocean, and its shores are indented by numerous estuaries, some of which extend for a considerable distance inland. Storm Bay, upon the south-east coast, is formed on the one side by Tasman's Peninsula—a tract of singular conformation, which stretches out far beyond the general line of coast, and is only connected with the rest of the island by a narrow isthmus,—and on the other by Bruni Island, which is of long and narrow shape, and is divided from the mainland by the channel of D'Entrecasteaux Strait. Storm Bay receives the waters of the Derwent—the principal river of Tasmania—and is extensively frequented by shipping. Upon the east coast, further to the northward, is Oyster Bay, an inlet of some magnitude. Maria Island, which recently attracted some notice as the scene of Mr. Smith O'Brien's captivity, lies in the southern portion of Oyster Bay: it is a spot possessed of great natural beauty, and such as might well serve to alleviate (if anything could) the sorrows and penalties of exile.

Port Dalrymple, on the north coast, in Bass's Strait, lies at the entrance to the estuary of the Tamar, the second in importance among the rivers of Van Diemen's Land. On the western side of the island are Macquarie Harbour and Port Davey (the latter towards the south-west), both of them the former seats of penal establishments, which have since been abandoned.

The scenery of Van Diemen's Land is everywhere of the most diversified aspect. The whole island consists of a succession of hills and valleys, the high ground rising in many places into lofty mountain-ridges and peaks, and displaying features of the grandest and most striking

description. Nor is the scenery here impaired in effect by that general scarcity of water under which the Australian mainland everywhere suffers: Van Diemen's Land is almost throughout copiously irrigated by running streams, and within the smoother recesses of its mountain valleys there are numerous lakes to add their charms to the attractive aspect of surrounding nature. Pity that so fair a scene should be surrendered to the tenancy of vice and crime, and that the works of man within its limits should be so little in unison with those of nature; for Van Diemen's Land is, after all, nothing more than a huge prison-house—the place of confinement for Britain's felons and outcasts!

“ Oh Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree,
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand,—
(But man would mar them with an impious hand!)”

The mountains of Van Diemen's Land belong, geologically and minerally, to the great chain which forms the cordillera of Eastern Australia. The channel of Bass's Strait merely interrupts the superficial continuity of the range, which re-appears at intervals in the peaked and barren islets that rise above its waters, and afterwards resumes its southwardly course upon the shores of Tasmania, which it traverses, in a zigzag direction, through its entire limits.

In a previous chapter we traced the dividing range of Eastern Australia from its culminating point, amidst the lofty summits of the Australian Alps, to the promontory of Cape Wilson, at which it sinks below the waters of

Bass's Strait. The chain of islands which thence stretch across the strait may be traced, in clear weather, from the summit of this headland.

The mountain-chain first re-appears upon the mainland of Tasmania at Cape Portland (the north-eastern extremity of the island): its height, however, is here inconsiderable, nor does it exceed 700 feet for a distance of thirty miles towards the interior. It then suddenly rises to an altitude of 3000 feet, and throws off, in several directions, various spurs, which cover the whole north-eastern section of the island, and impart a bold and striking configuration to its surface. One of these spurs terminates in the high and craggy greenstone peak of Ben Lomond (5000 feet above the sea), from the summit of which the spectator obtains a commanding view of the northern and eastern coasts of the island, with the fertile and beautiful valley of the Tamar—intersected by the windings of numerous silvery streams—spreading widely to the westward. The precipitous sides and lofty crest of this mountain present, indeed, the most varied aspects, and display, in particular localities, a wild and gloomy grandeur, not unworthy of the boldest features which belong to the natural scenery of the country whence its well-known name has been derived. From the central part of the mountain's top, the scene is one of unbroken solitude, silence, and desolation. On the bare earth, covered here and there with patches of snow in the midst of summer, thousands of prismatic greenstone columns, each eight or ten feet in diameter, lie prostrate beneath the foot of the traveller,—columns of gigantic order, chiselled by nature, and raised by her hands to this majestic elevation—where,

overthrown and broken into huge fragments, their ends project over chasms which are three thousand feet in perpendicular depth.*

Through a great portion of its further course across the island, the mountain-chain preserves a mean height of 3500 feet, and exhibits an irregular, craggy, and fractured crest of naked greenstone. Its spurs are steep and tortuous in their course; and its innumerable ravines, invariably deep and dry, are strewn with masses of rock of immense proportions. Towards the western side of the island, in the vicinity of Lake St. Clair, the mountains are, for the most part, topped by huge masses of quartz and sienite, while others of the spurs from the principal range are composed chiefly of greenstone and basaltic rocks. After throwing off, in the later portion of its course, numerous minor spurs and ridges, and studding with conical eminences the shores of D'Entrecasteaux Channel, the chain finally terminates in the southernmost point of the island, where it meets and sinks below the deep waters of the Southern Ocean. One of the principal spurs which diverges laterally from the main ridge separates the valleys of the rivers Derwent and Huon, and rises near the eastern coast into the huge protuberance of Mount Wellington, situated immediately at the back of Hobart Town. The flag-staff on the top of Mount Wellington is 4195 feet above the level of the sea; all the upper portion of the mountain is covered with snow during eight months of the year, and the cold blasts of air which frequently sweep down from its summit are a well-known characteristic of the climate experienced in its vicinity.

* Strzelecki.

The two principal rivers of Van Diemen's Land are the Derwent and the Tamar, the former of which waters the south-eastern, and the latter the northern, portions of the island. The Derwent issues from Lake St. Clair—a fine body of water, situated at the foot of the dividing range, in the more distant part of the interior; and, after a course of about 130 miles in a south-easterly direction, enters the sea at Storm Bay, on the eastern coast of the island. During the last twenty-five miles of its course, the Derwent forms a noble estuary, several miles in width, and navigable by ships of the largest size. It receives the waters of numerous tributaries on its way to the sea, to the principal of which the names of the Dee, Ouse, Shannon, Clyde, and Jordan, have been given. All of these join the stream of the Derwent upon its left, or northern, bank: to the southward, its valley is limited by the mountain ridge which divides it from the adjacent valley of the Huon, and which presses closely on the banks of either stream. The Huon flows into D'Entrecasteaux Channel, and also forms a fine estuary in its lower course. It gives its name to a species of pine, which grows abundantly in the wooded districts by which the greater portion of its valley is covered.

The Tamar is formed by the junction of the North and South Esk rivers, both of which flow from the precipitous skirts of Ben Lomond, in the north-eastern portion of the island. The town of Launceston is situated at the point where these streams unite their waters. The Tamar thence flows northward into Bass's Strait, forming throughout this part of its course an estuary which admits the passage of ships of 500 tons burthen. The Macquarie

and numerous other streams join the channel of the South Esk.

The rivers which flow towards the western shores of the island are all of shorter course. Two streams of some magnitude—Gordon and King's Rivers—enter Macquarie Harbour, about the middle of the western coast. Lakes are numerous in most parts of the interior; many of them lie embosomed in deep basins, or valleys, surrounded by well-wooded heights, and in the midst of scenery which exhibits almost every charm in the aspect of external nature.

The geological features of Van Diemen's Land are for the most part coincident with those of New South Wales, the mountains of this island constituting, in fact, only a detached portion of the great cordillera of Eastern Australia. Crystalline rocks—including granite, porphyry, protogene, sienite, quartz, serpentine, and many others—are everywhere the main components of its mountain-chains, intermingled in many places with greenstone, and the various forms of basalt and other masses of igneous origin. Among the sedimentary rocks are numerous varieties of limestone, together with clay slates and greywacke. Sandstone occurs chiefly towards the eastern side of the island, where it is super-imposed upon extensive deposits of coal.*

* Count Strzelecki, in the valuable work to which we have already made frequent reference, states as the result of a comparison of the crystalline with the sedimentary rocks through the entire area of Van Diemen's Land and the mountain region of Eastern Australia:—

“1st. That in New South Wales, the space occupied by the crystalline is to that of the sedimentary rocks as 3 is to 1.

“2nd. That in Van Diemen's Land, it is as 7 to 1.”

A classification of all the mineral masses, whether unstratified or

The latter valuable mineral is extensively distributed over the eastern division of the island, and is worked in

stratified, into two divisions, the one including rocks having more than sixty per cent. of silica, the other less than the above per centage, shows —

“1st. That, in New South Wales, the area of granite, protogene, hyalomictic, quartz-rock, sienite, siliceous breccia, quartzose porphyry, siliceous slate, sandstone, and conglomerate, all containing above sixty per cent. of silica, is, to the area of eurite, felspathic porphyry, greenstone and basalt rocks, containing less than sixty per cent., as 4.1 is to 1.

“2nd. That in Van Diemen's Land, on the contrary, the area of the first division is to that of the second, as 1 is to 3.

“This inverse ratio of siliceous to non-siliceous rocks in the two colonies, while it decides the question of the relative agricultural character of soils of each colony, shows, in the mean time, the effects of the volcanic agencies, which appear to have operated on a more extensive scale in Van Diemen's Land than in New South Wales.

“Indeed, the torn, rugged, furrowed, and contorted surface of the former colony bears ample witness to the formidable revolutions produced by the eruptive greenstone and basalt, overwhelming, in succession, different members of the series which then composed the consolidated crust, and sweeping away and burying a vegetation of which no living traces are now left on the island.

“But these changes have served only to render this island one of the most eligible spots on the face of the globe for the pursuits of agriculture; the irrupted greenstone yields an excellent soil, and the zigzag course of the chain of mountains forms naturally flat-bottomed valleys, between which rises a table-land about 3800 feet, enclosing in crateriform lakes five reservoirs of water, covering, if the surface were united, an area of 200 square miles, and capable of irrigating all the adjacent lands available to cultivation.

“New South Wales exhibits few records of irruptive igneous rocks, and preserves all its crystalline siliceous rocks in addition to the siliceous sedimentary ones, which, in the course of ages, have accumulated upon its surface.

“This difference in the predominant kind of rocks, and in the configuration of the surface, will probably assign to each colony a different form of future prosperity.

the neighbourhood of Port Arthur, and at other places near the coast, as well as in the interior, where it is traceable over a large area of country, in seams varying in thickness from a few inches to ten feet and upwards. The coal of Van Diemen's Land, and also that of New South Wales, is of various quality, according to the localities in which it is found. Some of that worked in Van Diemen's Land is strongly bituminous, and burns easily, with a bright flame. More frequently it has only a small proportion of bitumen, and burns slowly, emitting little or no smoke. Iron-ore, of very pure quality, and some of it highly magnetic, is of very general occurrence throughout the island. Copper is found in some of the hills near the north coast, and there are indications of lead, zinc, and manganese. For some time past the colonists have been anxiously engaged in the search for the more precious metal, stimulated by the rich auriferous deposits which have so startlingly affected the pursuits of their brethren in the provinces of the Australian mainland. The known geological features of the island—the mountain-chain of which is, as we have seen, a prolongation of the auriferous cordillera stretching through New South Wales and Victoria—render it in the highest degree probable that this search will ere long be successful; indeed, recent accounts from this part of the world already make mention of such a result, although the extent of the discovery is not yet ascertained.

“New South Wales, by the nature of its soil, seems destined apparently to become a pastoral, Van Diemen's Land an agricultural, country.” — *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*. London, 1845.

The climate of Van Diemen's Land is among the finest—perhaps, indeed, in some respects, *the* finest—in the world. It possesses all the advantages of the Australian climate, with but few of its drawbacks. The atmosphere is sufficiently warm, but at the same time free from the intense heat, and almost withering aridity, which is experienced in New South Wales and the other provinces on the Australian mainland. This is a consequence of the higher latitude of Van Diemen's Land, and of its strictly insular character, which, as in the case of all countries open to the climatic influences of a surrounding ocean, imparts to the air a greater degree of moisture. Hence the superior vigour of its native vegetation, and the greater density of its forests.

In regard to temperature, the climate of Van Diemen's Land bears much resemblance to that of the south and south-western coasts of England. The mean annual heat of Hobart Town is 52° , the mean of summer 63° , and of winter 42° . During the latter season, severe frosts are sometimes experienced in high and exposed situations, and a good deal of snow falls; but the snow never lies on the lower grounds during the daytime. The winter is generally a season of moderate and genial rain; occasional rains, with high winds, occur during the spring, but the weather is usually bright and clear. During the summer and autumn months, the atmosphere is almost uniformly clear and transparent, and the sky free from clouds and vapours. The hot wind, which is occasionally experienced during the summer, though to a less painful extent than in the colonies on the Australian mainland, is, in fact, the only drawback to the advantages of the Tasmanian climate; and this pheno-

menon is altogether exceptional to its general character. The air of Van Diemen's Land is equally healthy with that of Australia, and is found to be well adapted to the English constitution.

Owing to the cooler temperature, and the greater moisture, of the atmosphere, numerous plants for which the Australian soil is too arid are found to succeed in this island. The gooseberry and currant, for example, and also the apple, thrive equally well in Van Diemen's Land as in our English gardens and orchards, and the casual visitor to these distant shores recognises with delight many of the flowers and shrubs which are most familiar to his experiences of home. In fact, the whole island wears a more *English* aspect than is found in any other of the Australian colonies. The common scarlet geranium grows luxuriantly, and imparts its brilliant hue to the distant aspect of extensive tracts of country; the sweet-briar adorns the hedges, and adds its fragrance to the air; the pastures exhibit a brighter green; and within the grounds of the wealthier settlers may occasionally be seen a herd of fallow-deer, adding their graceful movements to the quieter charms of the surrounding landscape.

The native vegetation of Van Diemen's Land resembles in its general character that of the Australian continent: all the trees are evergreens, and their foliage has hence the dark and sombre aspect already noticed as characteristic of Australian botany, while it is in the highest degree rich and luxuriant. Here, as elsewhere in this portion of the globe, the huge gum-trees impart the prevailing character to the woodland scenery. Next in frequency of occurrence are the acacias, mimosas, pines, and myrtles.

The timber of Van Diemen's Land is frequently of the finest description; dense forests, of many miles in extent, are found in different portions of the island, and they consist for the most part of trees which possess a high degree of value—some from their utility as building-materials, and others from the ornamental grain of their wood, which fits them for the purposes of the cabinet-maker. A collection of specimens of the native woods of this island formed, it will be remembered by many of our readers, a prominent and interesting feature in the more strictly industrial portion of the Great Exhibition of last year.

Among the more valuable members of the Tasmanian forest are the blue gum, the stringy bark, the black-wood, the musk-wood, Huon pine, cedar pine, celery pine, pink-wood, rosewood, myrtle, and a variety of trees yielding gums and resins. The blue gum furnishes a timber which is equal to oak for the purposes of ship-building, and which may be obtained of large dimensions up to lengths of 200 feet. Colonel Mundy mentions a living gum-tree, in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town, which measures 60 feet in circumference at 15 feet above its base, and has a height of 270 feet, although it has lost its top. The stringy bark is used chiefly for house-building and fencing: it is a large tree, sometimes of proportions as gigantic as the blue gum, but the timber is coarse in grain. The black-wood* is a hard, close-grained, and richly-veined wood, admirably

* This tree is called lightwood on one side of the island (in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town), and blackwood in the vicinity of Launceston, on the opposite coast. Its timber is considered to be more deeply veined and tinted on the northern than on the southern side of the colony.

suited for ornamental cabinet-work; the Huon pine, the musk-wood, and the myrtle, serve for a similar purpose. The musk-wood grows only in dense forests, and in damp situations: it is close and fine in the grain, and harmonises well with the gilding on picture-frames, into which it is often worked up. The myrtle of Van Diemen's Land often forms dense forests, of many miles in extent, and the individual trees attain a girth of thirty or forty feet, with a proportionate elevation; the wood is of a fresh pink colour when newly hewn, and is beautifully veined.

The cedar pine (or pencil pine, as it is also termed) is found growing in the ravines or gorges amongst the mountains, and on the high table-lands; in some places the dead and bleached stems of this tree form bare and unsightly groves at an altitude of 3000 or 4000 feet above the sea. The celery-topped pine attains a height of 150 feet, and grows in all the colder and moister parts of the island, in a handsome pyramidal form: the young trees are sometimes used as spars for rigging vessels, but they are too heavy; the timber is very white and close-grained, and useful for household purposes.

The dog-wood is one of the richest-looking and most beautiful fancy woods; it attains a larger size on Maria Island than elsewhere, and is a mere shrub in the vicinity of Hobart Town. The Oyster Bay pine (which derives its name from the inlet so called, on the east side of the island) is used for agricultural implements, and for fittings of houses: it is only to be met with along the coast of the colony.

The pink-wood grows chiefly on the western side of Van Diemen's Land, amidst the dense myrtle forests, and

attains an altitude of from 100 to 150 feet, with a good clear barrel; its timber is fine-grained, and remarkably hard, and has been advantageously used in making sheaves for ships' blocks. The iron-wood, or *lignum vitæ* of Tasmania, is used for a similar purpose: this tree rarely attains a diameter of more than twelve or fourteen inches, but its wood possesses great density and hardness.

The grass tree, which is abundant on Flinders Island (in Bass's Strait), as well as upon the meagre soils of clay and sand in the neighbouring islands and mainland, yields a gum-resin, or balsam, of highly inflammable properties: this resin, upon combustion, produces a clear white flame, with a fragrant odour, like that of frankincense. It also furnishes a nankeen-coloured dye, is used in making sealing-wax, and may be made the basis of a varnish.

The leaves and delicate succulent twigs of the white gum tree of Van Diemen's Land, after perforation by an insect during the summer, yield a kind of manna (probably of similar kind to that mentioned in a previous page as found amongst the gum forests of New South Wales). This substance exudes from the tree, and falls in the form of irregular tears; it is usually very abundant during the summer and autumn months, and possesses properties resembling those of the manna of our druggists' shops.

One of the most curious among the indigenous productions is that called the native bread, which is really a large truffle, growing underground, like the English truffle, and possessing a peculiar smell. One of the specimens of this plant exhibited in Hyde Park last year weighed, in its original state, upwards of fourteen pounds. It formed, in a half-roasted state, a portion of the diet of the aborigines,

by whom it was eagerly sought, and is also eaten greedily by the various marsupial animals. It has been successfully employed in soups and puddings by Europeans.

The native animals of Van Diemen's Land are for the most part the same as those of the Australian continent; there is the same preponderance, among its mammalia, of those which belong to the marsupial genus, and the same absence of the larger forms of animal life. Besides three species of kangaroo, there are numerous opossums, together with kangaroo rats, bandicoots, and others of this family. The kangaroos are yearly becoming scarcer, under the influence of the chase, which is as keenly pursued here as in the neighbouring colonies.

One of the opossums—that called the hyæna opossum (*Thylacenus cynocephalus*), or the “tiger” of the colonists—is a large and formidable animal, and is very destructive to the flocks. It is sometimes nearly as large as a heavy stag-hound. This species of opossum is peculiar to Van Diemen's Land, where its ravages are as much dreaded as those of the wolf in other countries; but it is eagerly hunted down by the colonists, and will probably ere long become extinct. Another animal of the same genus (popularly known as “the devil”), about the size of a Scotch terrier, is extremely ugly, destructive, and untameable. It also affords occupation to the colonial sportsman: when set upon by the dogs, it will fight most savagely, and is said to be so strong in the jaws as to be able to snap the leg-bone of a dog. The smaller opossums, kangaroo rats, and bandicoots, do serious mischief to the potato crops.

The dingo has been exterminated from this island by the persevering efforts of the colonists. Van Diemen's

Land contains the Australian porcupine, the wombat, the tiger-cat, and the smaller variety of the native wild-cat, an elegantly marked animal, somewhat resembling the English weasel; it commits serious destruction in the poultry yard. The duck-bill, or *ornithorhynchus*, is also among the members of its native zoology.

All the native birds of Australia, likewise, occur in this island—laughing jackasses, black and white cockatoos, bright-plumaged parrots and parroquets, black swans, and numerous others. The emu has now become scarce in Van Diemen's Land, and is rarely seen. The sooty petrel (or mutton-bird, as it is popularly called), which is common throughout the coasts and islands of this portion of the globe, abounds in the islands of Bass's Strait. It is sought by the Tasmanian colonists for the sake of its feathers, which are much used for making pillows, bolsters, and mattresses, a purpose which they answer exceedingly well. This bird is of some interest in connection with the early history of Australian colonisation, having been the means of saving from actual starvation a numerous body of settlers who had been stationed upon Norfolk Island, shortly after the first establishment of the settlement at Port Jackson.

There are several snakes in Van Diemen's Land, with lizards and various smaller members of the reptile and insect tribe. But they occasion little annoyance to the settlers, who enjoy a comparative immunity from the flies and other insect-torments of the Australian mainland.

The history of the aborigines of Van Diemen's Land forms a melancholy chapter in the records of European colonisation, and their fate has been one that might well serve "to point a moral." Everywhere we find

the same results to coloured races from the contact of the white man: disease, vices hitherto unknown, cruel oppressions, savage retaliation, open warfare, and the sure diminution in the numbers of the native population—frequently the rapid progress towards utter extinction.

When Van Diemen's Land was first colonised, in 1803, it contained an aboriginal population of several thousands, identical in race and habits with the native tribes of the Australian continent. They were, at first, peaceably disposed towards the settlers, but disputes broke out before long. After the prevalence, for a lengthened period, of a frightful system of bloody attacks and reprisals upon either side, a general war of extermination was waged against them by the settlers, which resulted in the surrender of the few remaining members of the black population—then reduced, in 1835, to scarcely more than two hundred in number—and their removal, with their own consent, to Flinders Island, in Bass's Strait. These unfortunate children of nature were here made to undergo (from motives to the benevolence of which we readily accord the fullest credit) a schooling and disciplining in the arts and usages of civilised life,—by a process of drilling which has everywhere been productive of similar results. They were catechised, Christianised, and, in fine, pseudo-civilised; and—they rapidly diminished in number, and will, within a few years, have altogether passed away from the page of human existence! In 1835, when first deported to Flinders Island, they numbered two hundred and ten individuals; in 1842, after a lapse of seven years, they mustered only fifty-four—the births that had occurred during the intervening period (among a people who in their native

condition are equally prolific as any other members of the human family) having amounted only to the number of fourteen.*

There is something striking and pathetic in the words of remonstrance addressed by members of a persecuted and fast declining race to their would-be instructors in a discipline utterly uncongenial to their tastes, and altogether foreign to their ideas. "Leave us (said the now departed brethren of these few remaining Tasmanians to the English authorities) to our habits and customs; do not embitter the days which are in store for us, by constraining us to obey yours; nor reproach us with apathy to that civilisation which is not destined for us; and if you can still be generous to the conquered, relieve the hunger which drives us in despair to slaughter your flocks and the men

* The extraordinary diminution in the numbers of aboriginal races which has everywhere ensued from the discovery and settlement of their country by Europeans,—and which is alike instanced in America (both North and South), in New South Wales, in the islands of the South Sea, and in New Zealand, —leads the physiologist to a curious and not unimportant inquiry as to its immediate cause. The various observations that have been collected on this head appear to show that the diminution mainly results, not so much from any abridgment in the longevity of the native race, or from any considerable increase in the rate of mortality, as from a curtailment, on the part of the female, in the power of continuing the species. This seems to be an uniform consequence of the frequent intercourse, in all such countries, between the aboriginal female and the European of the other sex. When this takes place, the native female is found, in numerous instances, to lose the power of conception on the renewal of intercourse with the male of her own race, retaining it only in reference to the white man. The partial sterility thus induced is aided in its effects by the introduction of numerous diseases amongst the members — male as well as female — of the native population.— See Strzelecki's "New South Wales," &c. p. 347.

who guard them. Our fields and forests, which once furnished us with abundance of vegetable and animal food, now yield us no more: they and their produce are yours. You prosper on our native shore, and we are famishing!"

The settlement at Flinders Island has subsequently been abandoned, and the small remnant of natives removed to a station formed expressly for them (by the care of the colonial government) at Oyster Creek, on D'Entrecasteaux Channel. In 1848, the official returns of their number gave thirteen men, twenty-two women, and ten children (five of either sex), amounting in all to forty-five!

CHAP. XVIII.

Foundation of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land. — Its early History. — The Convict Population. — Penal Discipline. — Port Arthur. — Bush-ranging. — Agriculture. — Trade. — Hobart Town. — Launceston.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND had been discovered by the Dutch navigator, Tasman, in 1642, but was not ascertained to be an island, quite unconnected with the Australian coasts, until the voyages of Bass and Flinders, in 1797. The first settlement made on its shores was in the year 1803, when, agreeably to instructions received from the English government, a party of marines, with some Norfolk Island settlers, and a few convicts, sailed from Sydney, and landed on the banks of the river Derwent, in the south-eastern portion of the island. They fixed on a station upon the north bank of the river, a few miles higher up than the

site afterwards selected as that of the present capital, giving to this place of sojourn the appropriate name of *Rest Down*, since familiarised into Risdon. Grants of land were made to those of the new-comers who had been removed from Norfolk Island (their homes in which they had quitted with regret, in obedience to the orders of the English government for the relinquishment of the establishment that had been formed there), and the locality which they selected for these allotments, on the south bank of the Derwent, towards the head of the navigable portion of its channel, acquired the name of New Norfolk. Some among the early settlers were drafted to the northern portion of the island, where they pitched their camp upon a tract in the neighbourhood of the river Tamar, similarly bestowing on it, in memory of their former residence, the name of Norfolk Plains, by which it continues to be distinguished.

On the arrival of Colonel Collins, as lieutenant-governor of the settlement, in the following year, the neighbourhood of Sullivan's Cove, on the southern bank of the Derwent, was fixed on as the site of the intended capital, and the building of Hobart Town was at once commenced. A few months later, a further arrival of the free settlers of Norfolk Island, and also of convicts, took place; they were stationed at the mouth of the Tamar, upon the opposite side of the island, where the settlement of George Town (at first called York) sprang into existence; and, after the lapse of some years, that of Launceston, higher up the river.

The early history of Van Diemen's Land bears much resemblance to that of the elder colony, of which it was an offspring. Like the settlers of New South Wales, the

colonists of Tasmania were exposed, for some time, to great distresses, and suffered grievously from shortness of provisions. Gradually, however, the ground was brought into cultivation, though it was long before this island became, as it has been of late years, the granary of the Australian colonies. In 1817, fourteen years after the establishment of the settlement, the island contained only 2000 inhabitants, the majority of them convicts. Shortly after this period, however, numerous free settlers arrived from England, and the prospects of the colony rapidly improved. Inducements to emigrate thither, in the shape of grants of land, were held out by the home government. Improved breeds of stock were taken out by the new settlers, and, as in the elder colony of New South Wales, the capability of this country for the production of fine wool soon became manifest. The whale fishery was also extensively carried on, the agriculture of the island greatly extended, and the general resources of the province more fully developed. In 1824, the population had increased to upwards of 12,000; and by 1838, to nearly four times that number. At the last census it amounted to nearly 70,000.

During the first twenty years of its existence, Van Diemen's Land was a mere dependency of New South Wales. Subsequently it was raised to the rank of an independent colony, with its own courts of civil and criminal judicature, and it shares in the partial advantages conferred on the Australian colonies by the legislative enactment of 1850—advantages of which the value is by no means over-highly rated by the colonists themselves.

Throughout the period of its history, Van Diemen's

Land has been used as a penal settlement, and continues so at the present time, notwithstanding frequent (and energetic) remonstrances addressed by the colonists to the home government against the continued transportation of convicts thither. These offenders against British law have at all times constituted a large proportion of its inhabitants; and, since the practice of sending convicts to New South Wales has been discontinued, the ratio borne by the convict to the free population of Van Diemen's Land has increased. At the present time, more than half the total number of males on the island are convicts. The consequences, in a moral and social point of view, have been, as may well be supposed, extremely injurious; indeed, many of the more respectable settlers have hence been induced to abandon the island.

Nor are the evils which result to society from the infusion of so large a number of criminals amongst its members confined to Van Diemen's Land. When their term of sentence has expired, or previously, if occasion offers, many of these offenders leave the island, and carry their vicious practices and example (for the discipline of a penal settlement is rarely, if ever, reformatory) to the adjacent colonies. Of the crimes committed in the provinces on the Australian mainland, a very large proportion are found to be the acts of individuals whose first experiences in the southern hemisphere have been acquired in the probation-gangs, or other forms of convict discipline, of Van Diemen's Land. In fact, now that transportation to the other colonies of Australia has been given up, the convict-system of Van Diemen's Land remains, as it were, a plague-spot upon the social welfare of this por-

tion of the globe; and, at whatever inconvenience to the mother country, it must, at no distant period, be altogether discontinued. The gold discoveries will tend to hasten this result: the allurements of the precious metal, in a locality so proximate to that which is the scene of their punishment and degradation, are too powerful to be successfully withstood by any forms of penal restraint; and already the felon population of Van Diemen's Land have begun to reap their share of the golden harvest. To transport criminals, at the public cost, to a province which is within easy reach of the richly auriferous shores of Australia, will not increase the respect which is due to the forms of English law, however much the practice might generate a desire on the part of many among the lower orders of society to place themselves under its operation.

The penal discipline of Van Diemen's Land is, however, a much severer thing than is generally imagined—in so far, at least, as the worse class of offenders is concerned. Labour on public works, in chain-gangs, is allotted to these:—only those who are minor offenders, or have passed (without the commission of any fresh delinquency) through a portion of their period of sentence, being allowed the indulgence of a “ticket of leave,” and assigned to the service of individuals among the free portion of the community. Strictly penal settlements, that is, places at which a severe and laborious discipline was maintained, have been established, at different periods, in various parts of the island, and as often abandoned—often after incurring an enormous expenditure on their account. Macquarie Harbour and Port Davey on the western coast, and Maria Island off the eastern shore, have been, at various times, employed in this manner. In

fact, almost all possible experiments in the way of penal discipline—at one time punitory, at another reformatory—now harsh, and then indulgent—every phase of convict discipline (“from grave to gay, from lively to severe”*) have been tried in this great model-gaol of Van Diemen’s Land, with at least abundant drafts upon the contents of Britain’s treasury, if with no other result. The expenditure, in the whole, of 60*l.* annually upon each convict (from the time of his conviction and deportation to that of his acquiring freedom by the expiration of his term of sentence), is regarded as a moderate calculation.

Port Arthur, upon Tasman’s Peninsula, on the south-eastern coast of Van Diemen’s Land, has been, for several years past, the head-quarters of the penal settlement; and it is here that the doubly-dyed offenders against law—the criminals twice (or perhaps thrice) steeped in crime, are confined. Tasman’s Peninsula is a place singularly well calculated for such a purpose, inasmuch as escape from it

* Among other amusing (the use of this word is justified by what follows) experiments which fall within the range of the Port Arthur school of discipline, Colonel Mundy tells us of the practice of *reading the prisoners to sleep!* Disbelieve it not, ingenious reader (we hope, by the way, that *you* are not at this moment reading yourself to sleep, under drowsy influences of our creating)—actually and soberly, after the prisoners are ensconced under their bed-clothes, a person, appointed for the purpose, begins reading to them aloud, and only discontinues his task when he becomes aware—perhaps from the unmistakable evidence of their nasal organs—that his audience are auditory no longer! Of debasing experiments we do not speak, or we might find them readily enough in such records of Port Arthur experience as the being propelled along a railway of several miles length by the mere brute strength of men—human beings employed exactly as so many cattle—their fetters clanking as they hurry along, under the watchful eye of the overseer!

is next to impossible. The narrow isthmus by which it is united to the remainder of the island is only 120 yards in width, and at short intervals across this neck of land there are stationed, besides military constables, nine powerful dogs, trained for the purpose, who immediately give notice of any person's approach. Eagle Hawk Neck, as this isthmus is called, connects Tasman's Peninsula with Forrester's Peninsula, to the northward, the latter being united to the main body of the island by a tract of land of similarly narrow proportions. Should any unfortunate criminal, despairing, as he well may, to escape the vigilance of the land-ward guardians of his prison-house, trust his person to the sea, vainly hoping of escape by means of his prowess in swimming (and the experiment is occasionally made), he is pretty well sure of involuntarily affording a meal to the sharks, who are always lying in wait in the adjacent waters.

The prisoners at Port Arthur, as well as those working in the chain-gangs in other parts of the island, are dressed in a livery of grey and yellow—whence the appellation of “canary birds,” by which they are familiarly known. In former times, bush-ranging prevailed in Van Diemen's Land—as in New South Wales—to an alarming extent. The crimes perpetrated by the bush-rangers—convicts who had escaped from penal settlements—were often of the most ferocious description, and thrilling tales are yet told of their daring acts of violence, their dangers, occasional sufferings, and frequent hair-breadth escapes from capture. The majesty of the law has indeed been successfully asserted against these social outcasts, and the frightful narrative of their crimes belongs to the past rather than

to the present. But the traces of their deeds, and of the violent end by which their career was almost uniformly terminated, are stamped indelibly upon the nomenclature of the country. "Murderers' Plains, Gallows' Hill, and Hell Gate are (Colonel Mundy tells us) the playful titles of three well-known spots in Van Diemen's Land."

The industry of Tasmania is chiefly agricultural; all the grains, fruits, and vegetables, of middle and southern Europe flourish. Excellent wheat is grown, and some of it exported—chiefly to New South Wales. The potatoes are of superior quality, and are largely consumed in the adjacent colonies; the turnips, and most other vegetables, attain an extraordinary size. The tracts in which cultivation has been most extensively pursued lie chiefly upon the eastern and northern sides of the island, and embrace also its north-western extremity, which includes the fertile district of Woolnorth. In the latter direction, agriculture has considerably extended within a recent period. From a late dispatch of the lieutenant-governor, we learn that the rich character of the soil in the north-western district had attracted numbers of people to whom the high price of produce offered an inducement amply sufficient to justify the heavy outlay of labour and capital necessary in clearing the forest. The landowners in that district were taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them of letting their land upon advantageous terms, and there appeared every prospect of a large extension of cultivation during the present and following years.* It seemed probable, however, that the extensive emigration to the gold-fields

* Extract of Dispatch, dated August 21st, 1851. Parliamentary Papers, June, 1852.

of the neighbouring colonies, then in active progress, would, for a time at least, operate as a serious check to these pursuits.

In the western portions of Van Diemen's Land, however, and particularly towards its south-western shores, there are extensive tracts which are altogether unsuited for agricultural purposes—rocky and barren districts, with scarcely a blade of grass upon their surface. According to Mr. Melville, there were not, in the year 1850, more than 150,000 acres under crop in the whole island, including meadow land laid down with English grasses,—less than a tenth part of the entire area of the country.

The Scotch thistle has become, from its extraordinarily prolific growth, a serious nuisance to the Van Diemen's Land farmer, in the same manner as to his fellow-agriculturist in the colony of South Australia. It is rapidly spreading over the bush lands, and the high roads in some parts of the island are literally lined with it. The sorrel weed—or colonial “clover,” as it is termed, from the red appearance which it imparts to the ground when seen at a distance—has spread over the ground in a manner which is similarly injurious to agriculture, invariably stifling the grain-crops wherever it has once taken root.

The increased demand for agricultural produce, which must of necessity ensue from the large additions made to the population of New South Wales and Victoria since the discovery of the gold-fields, bids fair to be highly advantageous to the farmers of Van Diemen's Land and South Australia, to whom those colonies have been accustomed, during many years, to look for their principal

supply of wheat. In fact, there can be no doubt that a large extension in the quantity of agricultural produce raised in both of these provinces will become absolutely requisite, if the gold-digging population are to be supplied with food at anything like reasonable rates, and it is to be earnestly hoped that the labour requisite to afford such increased production will not be wanting. But in the case of Van Diemen's Land, so great have been the attractions of "the diggings," that a large majority of the able-bodied labourers have left the colony, and there appears some reason to think that even the Anti-Transportationist portion of its landowners will (for a time) have to rely upon the aid of convict-service for their supply of food.

Wool forms the staple article of export from Van Diemen's Land to the mother country. There are in the island above 2,000,000 sheep, with more than 85,000 head of horned cattle, and 16,000 horses. Next in order of value is the produce of the whale-fishery, which is largely carried on from the various ports upon the extensive line of the Tasmanian coast. The oils of the southern black whale, the sperm whale, and black fish, are largely exported, together with whalebone.

The honey produced in Van Diemen's Land is of very fine quality. In no country on the globe do bees thrive better, or prove so productive with a trifling amount of attention—circumstances which are doubtless due to the mildness of the winter season, and to the fact of many of the native plants blooming during the winter months. The bee has now become naturalised in the forests, and many of the hollow trees are found filled with the produce of its labour.

Hobart Town (or Hobartton), the capital of Van Diemen's Land, contains about 16,000 inhabitants. It stands on the right bank of the Derwent, around the shores of a small and sheltered bight called Sullivan's Cove, at a distance of fourteen miles above the entrance of the river into Storm Bay. The voyage up the river, from the sea to Hobart Town, is through scenery of the most striking character, the banks on either side being covered with foliage, and the huge mass of Mount Wellington—its summit frequently capped with snow—forming a magnificent back-ground to the picture. Ships of the largest size are enabled to come close up to the fine wharfs that have been constructed on the shores of Sullivan's Cove, which constitutes a perfectly secure place for the loading and unloading of vessels in all weathers. In fact, the whole lower channel of the river, thence to Storm Bay, is an extensive and safe natural harbour. The city is neatly built, the streets for the most part wide and well-paved, the buildings—both public and private—of highly creditable appearance, many of the former, indeed, displaying considerable architectural merit. There are extensive breweries, distilleries, tanneries, timber and flour mills, together with establishments for the manufacture of soap, candles, starch, and numerous other articles.

The country in the immediate neighbourhood of the Tasmanian capital surpasses the environs of Sydney in picturesque beauty. The drive from Hobart Town to New Norfolk—twenty miles distant—is exceedingly attractive to the lover of fine scenery, the road lying along the banks of the Derwent for the greater portion of the way. Mount Wellington, too, the ascent of which begins

at a distance of about three miles from the city, is always a striking feature in the landscape, and the walks and drives about its lower declivities are equally varied and attractive. By the judicious care of the present governor, an ice-store has been established near the summit of the mountain, whence the good people of Hobart Town are daily supplied with the most luxurious of refreshments in a warm climate. The numerous springs which flow from Mount Wellington and the adjacent heights furnish a plentiful supply of water to the town, into which it is conveyed by pipes. New Norfolk is only a small and comparatively deserted village, but the neighbourhood is celebrated for its fine hop-grounds; the hop grows well in the soil of Van Diemen's Land, and yields a large produce.

The second town in the island is Launceston, immediately above the junction of the North and South Esk rivers, which unite to form the estuary of the Tamar. It is 120 miles distant from Hobart Town, and forms a sort of provincial capital for the northern division of the island. Launceston has considerable trade, but the navigation of the Tamar is difficult and dangerous, on account of the numerous shoals and banks: the larger class of ships anchor at George Town, near the entrance of the estuary. The site of Launceston is unhealthy; a great part of the town stands upon low ground, immediately on the margin of the river, on the opposite side of which there is an extensive swamp. It contains a population of about seven thousand. The highway between Launceston and Hobart Town is a good, macadamised road, and is regularly traversed by a stage-coach—the outside fare for the whole

distance being the extraordinarily low sum of five shillings. The roads in other parts of the island are generally defective, to an extent which interferes seriously with the value of agricultural produce, by impeding its ready transmission to the markets. Considerable efforts are being made by the government for the improvement of the means of internal communication throughout the island.

In the interior of Van Diemen's Land there are many small and thriving towns, some of them rapidly rising in importance. Among the number are Campbell Town, Oatlands, and Green Ponds—all situated on the main line of road between the capital and Launceston. Richmond, about fourteen miles from Hobart Town (at the head of an estuary which runs up to the northward of Storm Bay), is the key to an extensive agricultural district, and is likely to become a place of importance.

There is frequent communication between Van Diemen's Land and the neighbouring colonies by means of steamers, which leave both Hobart Town and Launceston for Melbourne, Sydney, and other places. Launceston, as the nearest port to the Australian mainland, is most extensively used for the purpose of this intercourse. The sailing distance between Hobart Town and Sydney is about eight hundred miles. From Hobart Town to Port Adelaide is upwards of a thousand miles. Between Launceston and Port Phillip is a distance of rather less than three hundred miles.

CHAP. XIX.

The Gold Fields of Australia. — First Announcement of the Discovery. — Previous Conjectures and Suggestions. — The Bathurst Gold Fields. — The "Hundredweight" of Gold. — The Victoria Gold Fields. — Ballarat. — Mount Alexander. — Scarcity of Labour at Melbourne. — Amount paid for Licence Fees. — General Distribution of the Precious Metal throughout the Australian Cordillera.

ON the 2nd of May, 1851 (the day succeeding that which witnessed, in our own country, the gorgeous pageant that accompanied the inauguration of the Great Exhibition of the World's Industry), — the Sydney "Morning Herald" startled the citizens of the Australian metropolis with the announcement that gold had been discovered, in a native state, within the colonial territory. "It is no longer any secret (ran the paragraph) that gold has been found in the earth in several places in the western country. The fact was first established on the 12th of February, 1851, by Mr. E. H. Hargreaves, a resident of Brisbane Water, who returned from California a few months since. While in California, Mr. Hargreaves felt persuaded that, from the similarity of the geological formation, there must be gold in several districts of this colony, and when he returned here his expectations were realised. What the value of the discovery may be it is impossible to say. Three men, who worked with very imperfect machinery, realised 2*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* each per diem; whether they will continue to do so remains to be seen. The subject was brought under the consideration of the government, who admitted Mr.

Hargreaves's claim to some consideration for the discovery, but of course could make no definite promise until the value of the gold field was ascertained. Mr. Stutchbury, the government surveyor, is now in the district, and Mr. Hargreaves has proceeded thence to communicate with him, and in a few weeks we may expect definite information. At present all that is known is that there is gold over a considerable district; whether it is in sufficient quantities to pay for the trouble of obtaining it remains to be ascertained. Should it be found in large quantities, a strict system of licensing diggers will be immediately necessary."

Such were the terms in which—with commendable editorial caution—the "small beginnings" of auriferous discovery in Australia were chronicled by the journalist. Within a year from the date of that announcement, gold to a value exceeding 4,000,000*l.* sterling had been shipped to England from the Australian colonies, and upwards of thirty thousand "diggers" were (at the date of the latest accounts) eagerly employed in the search after the precious metal in a single locality of the widely-extended gold fields belonging to these portions of the southern hemisphere. By recent arrivals from the colonies, it appears that the total quantity of gold yielded, up to the 8th of May of the present year, by the provinces of New South Wales and Victoria, amounted to a value of 4,338,320*l.* Two-thirds of this had been derived from the Victoria diggings, the total value of the gold furnished by New South Wales during the first year of operations having been 1,422,932*l.* The exports of gold from Sydney, up to May 7, had been 393,794 oz., and it was estimated that 50,000 oz. were

then lying in the harbour, and 40,000 oz. were supposed to be held by the banks and in private hands.

From the rate of produce which had been maintained for several weeks immediately preceding the date of advices received from Sydney and Melbourne during the month of October in the present year, it appeared by no means unlikely that from ten to fifteen millions sterling might hereafter be expected as the annual amount of Australia's contribution to the gold markets of the world.

The discovery of gold amongst the mountain ranges of Eastern Australia was not altogether accidental. As early as 1844, attention had been drawn by our eminent geologist, Sir Roderick Murchison, to the remarkable coincidence between the structure of the great mountain chain of New South Wales (as developed for the first time by the scientific researches of Count Strzelecki, to whose valuable labours we have so frequently referred,) and that of the auriferous system of the Ural Mountains, from the examination of which he had recently returned. And upon subsequent occasions Sir Roderick urged upon the notice of the practical geologists of Cornwall, as well as upon that of the colonial minister, the strong probability which (arguing by inductive reasoning, founded upon a comparison of the rocks of two widely-distant countries) he inferred to exist, of the search for gold amongst the Australian cordillera being found productive of successful results.*

* Earl Grey, the late Colonial Secretary, to whom Sir Roderick had expressed his views on the subject in 1848, refrained from taking any steps in the matter, from a fear that the discovery of gold would prove a source of embarrassment to a wool-producing country, such

Nor is this the only instance in which the great auriferous discovery of the past year may be said to have been anticipated by speculative reasoning, long previous to the practical confirmation of the theory which such considerations involved. Mr. G. W. Earle, in a paper which appears in the fifteenth volume of the Royal Geographical Society's Journal (published in 1845), referred to the uniformity of direction maintained between the mountain-chains of south-eastern Asia and those of the Australian continent as affording legitimate ground for speculation upon their submarine continuity, and his accompanying remarks anticipated — with a precision which subsequent events have rendered curiously and strikingly prophetic — the effects likely to follow from the discovery of the precious metals in our Australian colonies. "If it be found (writes Mr. Earle) that the mountain ranges of Australia are a continuation of those of Eastern Asia, we may expect that they will also afford the mineral wealth for which the latter are so celebrated. Our colonies in Australia are now in a condition which would render the discovery of valuable minerals of the very highest importance. The amount of agricultural produce raised in the colonies is considerably above that required for the consumption of the inhabitants, who are now anxiously looking about the world for a market for their surplus produce, and such a market would be afforded by a population employed in mining operations. We may reasonably

New South Wales: possibly also (though his Lordship does not say as *that*) from a not unreasonable expectation that such embarrassment, should it arise, would re-act with some force upon the ordinary routine of official duties at home.

expect that mineral wealth is not confined to the district of South Australia. The great range extending the entire length of the north-east coast is of a very promising description," &c. &c.*

But evidence of a more practical character had existed in the colony itself long previously to the period of the actual discovery of Australia's golden treasures — or, rather, long previously to the general and confirmed belief in the reality of that discovery. Small quantities of native gold had, during many years past, been known to be in the occasional possession of the shepherds or other residents in "the bush," and they had even found their way to Sydney upon various occasions — though no one appears to have taken any particular trouble to ascertain whence they had been derived. One old man, named Macgregor, was even in the habit of coming once a year to Sydney with small pieces of gold, which he always disposed of to a jeweller; but he never divulged the secret place of his treasure, nor does it seem that any particular curiosity was entertained on the subject. More unaccountable and extraordinary still, one authenticated instance is recorded of an assigned convict-servant having been ordered to receive fifty lashes for being detected with a lump of gold in his possession — it being inferred (as a matter of course, and a thing which required no evidence in its proof) that he must have obtained it by means of stealing watch-

* Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xv. p. 343. London, 1845. Amidst the claims that have been made to the credit of early anticipation of the auriferous discoveries in Australia, Mr. Earle's name appears to have been somewhat unfairly overlooked.

chains or other ornaments made of the precious metal, which had been subsequently melted down!

Again, as far back as 1841, the Rev. W. B. Clarke, an able local geologist, of whose valuable services the colonial government has since wisely and justly availed itself, is stated to have brought small samples of gold from the basin of the very river which now constitutes one of its chief sources of supply (the Macquarie), and to have expressed to many persons in the colony his conviction that it would prove to be "a gold country." This gold is even said to have been exhibited to members of the colonial government and legislature, as well as to numerous other persons in the colony. And in 1847, the same gentleman published a paper in which the geological formation of New South Wales is scientifically treated, and in which he distinctly makes mention of the existence of gold amongst its extensive schistose and quartzite formations. Several years previously (1839—1843), Count Strzelecki, as we have seen, had examined, with the eye of a practised geologist, and the scientific acquirements of a richly-stored mind, the physical structure of the colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, but without making the discovery of their auriferous wealth, although his observations showed their identity of formation with the auriferous regions of other lands.

But notwithstanding all this evidence, and much more of a similar kind, the colonists at large appear to have pertinaciously closed their eyes to the riches spread so abundantly over the very surface of their soil, and the discoveries of Mr. Hargreaves in the Bathurst district burst upon their astonished senses like a thunder-clap. At first

its reality was doubted,—the tale appeared too enticing for belief,—or, in the words of an old Scotch proverb, “ower good to be true.” And when every day’s experience proved its correctness, and showed, too, that the real extent of the treasure far exceeded even the most sanguine anticipations that had been originally formed regarding it, the fact that Australia was a gold-producing region came upon its inhabitants, as upon the world at large, invested with all the brilliancy of a great discovery. During the two preceding years, thousands had left the colony of New South Wales for California, in the hope of enriching themselves by a share in its lately-discovered treasures; the tide had now turned, and, instead of crossing the Pacific in search of gold, all classes amongst the population of Sydney directed an anxious and longing eye towards their western chain of mountains, and the auriferous regions which were ascertained to lie beyond.

The excitement which prevailed in the colony was of course considerable; but, all things considered, the process of gold-seeking in Australia was gone about in a systematic way, and with less of derangement to the ordinary pursuits of labour than would probably have occurred amongst any other than so thoroughly English a population. A license-fee of thirty shillings a month for the right to search for gold upon public lands was immediately imposed by the colonial government, and has all along continued to be collected without any material difficulty; and, with comparatively few exceptions, a tolerable state of order and quietude appears to have been maintained at the “diggings.” The effect of the discovery upon the labour-market was at once felt, and, with the increasing number and extent of the

gold fields, especially in the Victoria district, this continued to acquire potency, until the general scarcity of labour, and the extraordinarily high rate of remuneration demanded in return for it, threatened to be productive of consequences injurious to the material welfare of the colonies. Consequences highly annoying to the higher classes among colonial society, and amusingly subversive of the ordinary relations of society, it rapidly produced. Amidst the general rush to "the diggings," masters have been deserted by their workmen, official authorities abandoned by their subordinates, and the heads of establishments left to perform the menial work of their household—groom their own horses, light their own fires, and cook their own dinners,—while their servants are picking up "nuggets," or rocking auriferous "cradles," at a distance of some two or three days' journey up the country. The governor of a province, we are told, was obliged to chop wood to light the fire before his breakfast could be prepared, the son of a chief-justice had to become his own shoe-black—merchants and store-keepers to officiate as their own porters and draymen: and ladies are obliged to scrub their own floors, and cook their own dinners, whilst their former "helps" flaunt gaily in silks and satins, with other articles of finery purchased with the gold abundantly supplied by their relatives at the diggings.

The locality in which the first discovery of gold was made by Mr. Hargreaves was the neighbourhood of Summerhill Creek,—a small feeder of Lewis River, one of the tributaries of the upper Macquarie, on its left or western bank, situated in the direction of north-west from Bathurst, from which place it is about thirty miles distant (or about

140 from Sydney). A spot on the banks of Summerhill Creek soon acquired, and has retained, the attractive name of Ophir. But the Ophir diggings were shortly surpassed in amount of produce by those of the Turon, a river which flows into the right bank of the Macquarie some distance above the junction of Lewis River. Meroo Creek, further to the northward, another of the sites of auriferous wealth, also belongs to the basin of the same river, the whole valley of which, from the neighbourhood of Bathurst downwards, appears to possess on either hand an abundant supply of the glittering treasure.

It was at Meroo Creek that the largest quantity of gold hitherto discovered in a single mass was found by a black shepherd, in the employ of Dr. Kerr. It contained nearly a hundred-weight of gold, and realised upwards of 4000*l*. It was found amongst a number of quartz blocks, forming an isolated heap, which was lying about a hundred yards distant from a vein of quartz stretching from the creek up the ridge. This splendid specimen of the Australian "El Dorado" was unfortunately broken into pieces by its lucky possessor, for the sake of greater convenience in its removal: in its complete state, it would have been the largest known mass of native gold in the world. The Imperial Museum at St. Petersburg contains a *pepite* (or, in Australian phraseology, a *nugget*), brought from the Siberian mines, which weighs eighty-seven pounds, and lumps of considerable magnitude have been discovered in California and elsewhere; but a hundred-weight of gold, in one mass, was a thing hitherto unheard of.

The discovery of this "monster" lump of the glittering treasure was altogether accidental: it was made by a

"black fellow" while engaged in tending a flock of sheep, and in a spot where the surrounding herbage had grown for centuries, undisturbed by the hand of man, and unheeded. Gold being at the time the universal theme of conversation, the sable tender of flocks had provided himself with a tomahawk, and—sharing in the general excitement—had amused himself with exploring the country adjacent to his master's land. His attention was called to the spot in question by observing a glittering substance upon the surface of a huge fragment of quartz rock, a portion of which was soon broken off by a blow of his tomahawk. He at once started home and disclosed the discovery to his master, and shortly afterwards the blocks of quartz, with their embedded hundred-weight of gold, were released from the soil in which they had rested for ages. The adjoining country was, of course, diligently explored, but, with the exception of dust, nothing of any consequence has been found in the immediate neighbourhood of the spot that had been occupied by the golden mass.

The discoveries to which we have been referring, as well as others that shortly ensued, were made in localities within the limits of the New South Wales territory. But it was soon ascertained that the auriferous deposits of the Australian soil were not limited to that colony. Gold fields which surpassed those of New South Wales in richness of yield were found to exist in the neighbouring province of Victoria, and in places more readily accessible from the maritime districts. Early in the month of September, gold was found at a place called Ballarat, forty miles distant from Geelong (on Port Phillip), and within a few days afterwards at Mount Alexander, seventy miles from Melbourne.

The latter locality has proved by far the richest of the Australian gold fields hitherto worked, and has attracted by much the greater number of diggers — though no single mass equalling the “Kerr eureka” (as the glittering hundred-weight has been appropriately termed) has been found elsewhere. The workings at Ballarat and Mount Alexander rapidly proved so successful as completely to throw into the shade the diggings that had already been commenced at Anderson’s Creek and other places nearer to Melbourne.

The Ballarat diggings lie to the north-westward of Geelong, about six miles distant in a straight line from a remarkable volcanic hill known by the name of Boninyong, and to the west of Warreneep, another eminence of similar formation, rising on the same ridge or watershed. The geological formation of the country around exhibits the ordinary quartz, iron-ore, sandstone, and clay-slate, which is so general throughout the colony. “Golden Point,” where the principal workings at Ballarat were opened, presents no external features of difference from any other of the numerous forested spurs which stretch out from the base of the higher ridges, and which bound the valley of the Leigh on either side. This river flows to the southward, and joins the Barwon — a stream which enters the sea a short distance west of the entrance to Port Phillip, — so that Ballarat falls within the maritime drainage of the colony. Gold is found, in greater or less quantities, in the whole of the surrounding country, both on the ranges and in the flats, or in the beds of the watercourses.

A section of the Ballarat workings shows, below the superficial soil, the following strata: —

1. Red ferruginous earth and gravel.
2. Streaked yellowish and red clay.
3. Quartz gravels of moderate size.
4. Large quartz pebbles and boulders; masses of iron-stone set in very compact clay, hard to work.
5. Blue and white clay.
6. Pipe clay.

The last mentioned is the lowest formation to which the workings have been carried, and the gold has uniformly been found in the formations superior in order of position to it. By far the richest deposits occur in the small veins of blue clay, where the ore is for the most part quite pure. It is found occasionally in irregular rolled and water-worn lumps (or "nuggets") of various sizes, from a quarter or half an ounce to two ounces in weight, sometimes incorporated with round pebbles of quartz, which appears to have formed its original matrix; at other times, without any admixture whatever, in irregular, rounded, or smooth pieces, and again in fused irregular masses of pure metal, weighing in some instances seven or nine ounces. It is also found combined with quartz pebbles or gravel of various sizes, evidently united to them while in a fused state, and on the surface of the detached masses of iron sandstone; but in the greatest abundance in the clays, from which it is washed in the form of rounded or flattened grains, like sifted gravel and sand of various sizes.

The effect of the success which attended the Ballarat gold diggers produced amongst the Port Phillip community a similar excitement to that caused among the people of Sydney by the news of the Bathurst discoveries. Within a few weeks from the date of their becoming known,

there were not less than between two or three thousand persons at work on the ground,—rocking cradles, or engaged in the attendant operations of gold-washing, and thousands of others were either on the way thither, or making the preliminary arrangements for starting. “Within the last three weeks” (wrote the governor of the colony, under date of October 10. 1851 *) “the towns of Melbourne and Geelong, and their large suburbs, have been in appearance almost emptied of their male inhabitants; the streets which for a week or ten days were crowded by drays loading with the outfit for the workings, are now seemingly deserted. Not only have the idlers to be found in every community, and day-labourers in towns and the adjacent country, shopmen, artisans, and mechanics of every description, thrown up their employments, and in most cases, leaving their employers and their wives and families to take care of themselves, run off to the workings; but responsible tradesmen, farmers, clerks of every grade, and not a few of the superior classes, have followed; some unable to withstand the mania, and the force of the stream, or because they were really disposed to venture time and money on the chance, but others, because they were, as employers of labour, left in the lurch, and had no other alternative. Cottages are deserted, houses to let, business is at a stand-still, and even schools are closed. In some of the suburbs not a man is left, and the women are known for self-protection to forget neighbours’ jars” (his Excellency, we observe, bears indirect testimony to the accorded habits and privileges of the gentler sex), “and to group

* Further Papers relative to the recent Discovery of Gold in Australia, June, 1852.

together to keep house. The ships in the harbour are in a great measure deserted."

Even the rich results of the Ballarat diggings were, however, insignificant compared to those realised in the workings at Forest Creek, in the neighbourhood of Mount Alexander, and within the circuit watered by the upper course of the river Loddon and its tributary streams. The first gold in this quarter was discovered in a seam of compact quartz of about a foot in thickness, lying between the strata of clay-slate and mica-slate. The search for it in this locality originated in the fact of a small piece of gold combined with quartz having been picked up by a shepherd on his folding-ground. The report soon spread, and numbers shortly rushed to the spot. By the 3rd of December there were upwards of 12,000 people collected within an area of fifteen square miles around the base of Mount Alexander, many of the former diggers at Ballarat being included amongst the number. Within the lapse of another fortnight they had increased to 20,000, and the aggregate of gold raised within this glittering locality was already beginning to be calculated by hundred-weights, and even tons. A large proportion of the miners actually at work were making large profits. A pound weight of gold a day was accounted a small remuneration for a party of diggers,—many secured five or six pounds,—while there were instances of as much as fifty pounds weight being the result of but a few hours' labour. Large quantities were collected without difficulty almost from the very surface, and even where the ore lay below the alluvium, either immediately above or in fissures of the slate rock, the labour of reaching it was found much less than that ex-

perienced by the Ballarat workers. All around Mount Alexander, within the creeks belonging to the Loddon valley—right and left, through a region of many miles in continuous extent—the gold was found to exist, and in conditions of unrivalled abundance.

Poor Mr. Latrobe! never was governor of a colony in so unfortunate a predicament! In the midst of golden wealth, he appeared (like Midas of old) to run some risk of perishing from actual want—political as well as physical. His servants left him, and his officials on all sides deserted him. He doubled their salaries, but to no purpose:—to bid against the allurements of the golden harvest was a vain and fruitless attempt. No rate of pay would induce men, under existing circumstances, either to enter or remain in the public service when the whole community had, collectively and individually, made up their mind to try their fortunes in the gold fields, and when “nuggets” of the precious metal were freely passing from hand to hand within the sight of all. Policemen and constables walked off from their duties, and when the perplexed delegate of Majesty appealed to the “respectable inhabitants of the city to come forward” at such an unexampled crisis, and assist by their service as special constables in the preservation of public order, the aforesaid respectabilities of Melbourne metaphorically (and almost literally) told his excellency that “they wished he might get it.” In other words, they declined the honour proposed to be thrust upon them, significantly accompanying the refusal by the recommendation that a sufficiently increased remuneration to meet the exigencies of the case should be offered to those whose services government was desirous

of securing. But what amount of remuneration *could* suffice, when, within a few miles distance, fortunes were being almost picked up from the surface of the ground, and a chance stroke of the foot against a piece of rock might bring to light a golden "nugget" such as princes might almost have contended for the honour of possessing?

Meanwhile, the throng of gold-seekers was daily increased by arrivals from the neighbouring colonies:—Adelaide was almost deserted, the works of the Burra-Burra for a time nearly suspended, and Van Diemen's Land daily contributed its hundreds to swell the torrent of immigration into the golden regions of Victoria. Even the workers at the Turon, and other gold fields of the Bathurst district, deserted their diggings for the richer harvests of the precious metal that were to be so abundantly gathered in the sister province. Between the 1st of July 1851 and the 31st December of the same year, there had arrived in the colony of Victoria, by sea alone, no fewer than 10,900 persons—more than seven thousand of the number being immigrants from the neighbouring colonies, chiefly from Van Diemen's Land and South Australia: and between the 1st and 17th of January immediately following, these were increased by further arrivals to the number of 2,781, mostly from the same quarters. This was independent of the many thousands who had reached the province overland, from New South Wales and South Australia, and whose exact numbers there were no means of ascertaining.

At one time, it had been determined by the lieutenant-governor of Victoria to double the amount of the license-fee,—an intention which, on the energetic remonstrances of the gold-digging throng, was wisely abandoned. Indeed, the amount realised by the present rate was already on a

scale such as might well be supposed to content even the tax-loving ideas of official authority, and to form no inconsiderable addition to the ordinary crown revenue of the province. The amount paid for license-fees within the province of Victoria during the last three months of 1851 amounted to 25,480*l.*—nearly 18,000*l.* of the amount being contributed by the Mount Alexander diggers alone; and the escort-fees paid by individuals for the safe transmission of their gold from the diggings to Melbourne amounted, during the same period, to 3,634*l.* Up to the close of February in the present year (1852), the total sum paid for license-fees, in the province of Victoria, had become increased to upwards of 62,000*l.* And by intelligence of a later date we learn that the proceeds of the gold-licenses issued during the first quarter of the year, in the colony of Victoria, amounted to 48,597*l.*, and the escort-fees to 4,489*l.* The sale of crown lands, within the same period, realised 94,273*l.*, being an increase of 9,700 per cent. upon the corresponding quarter of 1851.

The following Table, showing the comparative returns of the General and Crown revenues in the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, for the corresponding quarters of 1851 and 1852, is an instructive comment upon the astounding consequences of the gold discoveries.

QUARTER ENDING MARCH 31.

	1851.	1852.	Increase.
NEW SOUTH WALES.	£	£	£
General Revenue -	71,811	83,113	11,302
Crown Revenue - -	18,083	36,060	17,977
VICTORIA.			
General Revenue -	39,679	75,272	35,593
Crown Revenue - -	9,439	156,827	147,388

The monthly charge of 30s. for a gold-digging license is payable in advance, either in money, or in gold at the rate of 3*l.* per ounce. The escort-fee is 1*l.* per cent. on the amount so conveyed; but probably not more than two-fifths of the gold realised at the workings is forwarded by the government escort, large quantities finding their way to the coast towns by private hands,—so that the official returns of the quantity of gold fall very considerably short of that which is actually obtained on the ground. The evil of the licensing system is that the unsuccessful digger pays as much as the one who realises his hundreds or his thousands by his labours in the golden harvest-ground; but it is, nevertheless, probably the least objectionable mode of collecting a revenue from the gold fields that could have been devised under the circumstances, and the attempt to enforce payment of any royalty on the amounts raised by individual diggers would clearly have been futile.

Mount Alexander has continued, up to the date of the latest advices, the most productive scene of the gold-digger's labours; but every arrival has brought the intelligence of fresh localities in which the precious commodity was ascertained to exist, in either colony. It has been found amongst the schists and quartzites of the Liverpool Range (both in the Hunter's River district, and in the tract lying to the northward of the mountains, in the vicinity of the Peel River),—on the banks of the Abercrombie River (one of the streams which unite to form the Lachlan, to the westward of the Blue Mountains),—in the Araluen district, on the coast to the southward of Jervis Bay,—and in the tract surrounding Lake Omeo, situated high amongst the

ranges of the Australian Alps,—besides numerous other and less important localities. In fact, there is no doubt that the whole succession of mountain ranges which stretch through the provinces of New South Wales and Victoria,—from the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay southward to the extremity of the Australian continent in that direction,—constitute throughout a great auriferous cordillera; and one, too, in which other metals besides gold will hereafter be found in great abundance. Lake Omeo, and the banks of the Mitta-Mitta, which flows thence into the upper portion of the stream of the Murray, appear from the local explorations of the Rev. Mr. Clarke—the chief scientific geologist of the colony—to constitute the nucleus of the golden region, and promise to yield almost inexhaustible supplies of the glittering metal.

The yield of gold hitherto afforded by the Australian diggings has all been realised by the simplest processes of mechanical labour—either by merely washing the soil, through the agency of the “cradle,” or by the search after “nuggets,” aided by the use of the pick and the crowbar. Many companies have, as is well known, been formed for the purpose of a more scientific method of proceeding, and the process of quartz-crushing will ere long be in active operation in various localities of the two colonies. Through their means, assisted by the vastly increased number of immigrants from the mother-country who must now be pouring into the colony, it is probable the produce of the Australian gold-fields will (*for a time*) be raised to a still higher rate than they have hitherto maintained, and that it will at least rival—or even exceed—the results of Californian gold-digging. The ten millions furnished

annually by California during the last two or three years has already more than doubled the ordinary yearly rate of gold produce throughout the globe, and now we have the auriferous treasures of our Australian colonies to swell the amount. Upon the probable effects of so startling an addition to the already existing stock of the much-coveted metal, we forbear to dwell: but experience of the past has shown that there is little probability of any precipitate or violent disturbance in its standard of value. "It takes (to use the words of a late eminent statesman*) a long time, and a great disproportion in the amount of supply, to affect the relative value, *throughout the world*, of two such articles as gold and silver."

CHAP. XX.

Life at the Diggings. — Its Hardships. — The "Cradle." — Want of Water. — Comparative Earnings of the Diggers. — Price of Provisions. — Value of Labour. — Debasing Nature of the Pursuit.

A GOLD-DIGGER's life is by no means an easy one — as may be readily believed by all who have glanced, even in the most cursory manner, at the numerous accounts which have already reached us from the scene of action. It implies a total abnegation of everything in the shape of comfort — a disregard of all the ordinary forms and usages of civilised life — the possession of a constitution which can withstand all vicissitudes of weather, of a temperament which can submit with patience to the alternate

* Sir Robert Peel.

torments of heat, insects, dust, rain, cold, and out-door exposure (adopting, like Mr. Mark Tapley, the philosophy of being "jolly" under all such untoward circumstances),—and of a capacity for the endurance of no small amount of bodily fatigue and muscular exertion. In short, the gold-digger must be prepared to suffer every conceivable hardship short of actual starvation. "None are fit for the diggings" (writes a recent practitioner in the art of gold-finding) "who cannot sleep under a tree in the open air, drink water of all colours, go for a week unwashed and unshaved, and submit to be overrun with vermin." A pleasant prospect, truly, for which to traverse half the circumference of the globe!

But there are two sides to every picture, and the above is the darker one. Neither the prospect of hard work, nor of any other evils—moral or physical—will deter men from the pursuit of gold-seeking, while there remains a chance of adding to their store of worldly wealth by means so rapid as those that have been described. Nor—in so far as mere physical labour is concerned—is the work of the gold-digger harder than most other kinds of out-door manual occupation. To the bushman, trained in habits of simplicity and self-denial, and accustomed to the burning heat of an Australian summer sun, it is of trifling consequence. To those who have hitherto known no harder bodily life than that of the counting-house and the office desk, it is doubtless a life of unwonted toil—a much harder kind of work than they have ever tried before, and a much more serious affair than they perhaps anticipated. Probably a very considerable proportion of the recent emigrants to the Australian gold fields belong to

the latter class, and will find that handling the pickaxe, and engaging vigorously in the other labours of gold-digging, involve an amount of bodily exertion which they were little prepared to encounter.

To work the diggings to full advantage requires the services of a party of four persons—one to dig the auriferous soil from the ground, a second to carry it to the cradle, the third to employ himself in rocking that implement of the gold-washing craft, and the fourth to furnish the requisite supply of water. The “cradle” is a sort of oblong-shaped box, about eight feet long; at its head is a coarse wire grating, upon which the loose earth is emptied, and which of course prevents the larger stones from finding their way to the interior. It stands upon rockers, whence its name. The bottom of the cradle is of rounded form, with an inclination downwards of half an inch or more to the foot, and has several small cleets across from side to side. A stream of water is poured through the machine, and the rockers are meanwhile kept in motion; the water gradually clears away the earthy and gravelly matter, which finds its way out at the foot, while the gold and finer particles of sand are left behind, accumulated above the upper cleets at the bottom of the cradle. Such is the rude and primitive form of gold-washing common in Australia, and introduced thither from Californian experience.

The cradle is an almost universal attendant of the Australian gold-digger, and the absence of it is generally held to imply the abandonment of the not seldom delusive pursuit. Colonel Mundy tells us that parties of unsuccessful diggers, whom he met returning from the gold fields, were saluted in the villages through which they

passed with the derisive inquiry whether they had "sold their cradle?"—a form of interrogation which appears to have been amusingly provocative of wrath on the part of those to whom it was addressed. No inconsiderable portion of the Australian gold, however, has been procured in the form of "nuggets"—or by means of dry-digging, as it is termed—and with no other implement than the pick-axe or the crowbar.

Drought is the great enemy of the Australian "digger," as it is of the squatter. Water is indispensable to the operations of the cradle, and the scarcity of it during the lengthened period of an Australian summer has constituted a material check to the proceedings of the eager population assembled at Mount Alexander, Ballarat, and the other localities of auriferous deposit. For some time prior to the date of the later accounts, the diggers were looking forward anxiously to the advent of the rains, and the consequent rising of the creeks—in some of which the water was altogether dried up, and in others had become thickened, by the ceaseless work of thousands of rockers, into a material which could lay but questionable claim to the character of fluidity. Many of the diggers availed themselves of the opportunity to return home for awhile, and carry to their families the produce of their previous labours, while with those who remained "nuggetting" was the order of the day. And, notwithstanding all drawbacks of drought and hot weather, the yield of gold still continued temptingly great.

After all, the success of the gold-digger is only comparative, and the amount of his gains—to be fairly estimated—must be judged by the price-current of the various

necessaries of life, as well as by the enhanced value of labour consequent upon the absorption of so numerous a portion of the community in the engrossing pursuit. With the exception of beef and mutton, the price of provisions of all kinds is enormously high at the diggings, and in the towns the cost of everything has, within the last few months, become largely increased—at rates varying from 5 to upwards of 250 per cent. above their former value. In fact, the steady demand for articles of nearly every kind at the diggings has ensured them a more regular supply of most of the ordinary necessities of life than is to be met with (under present circumstances) in the markets of Sydney and Melbourne. Accommodation of every description is, however, extravagantly dear in the towns, and there are many kinds of services which are not obtainable at any price. At the date of some of the recent accounts, the price of bread had become raised from 5*d.* the 4 lb. loaf to 1*s.* 9*d.*; butter from 1*s.* 2*d.* per lb. to 5*s.*; potatoes from 8*s.* to 15*s.* per cwt.; groceries to 25 per cent., and vegetables in general to from 50 to 100 per cent., above their former prices; and even fresh meat—at all times the cheapest commodity in Australia—had advanced from 1½*d.* to 3*d.* a pound, or to double its standard price. Meanwhile, the cost of the ordinary articles of clothing, as boots and shoes, &c., was enormously high. A man realising 1*l.* a day at the diggings is therefore, in reality, no better off than he would have been, under ordinary circumstances, when in the receipt of considerably less than half that sum.

A large number of the diggers find themselves altogether unsuccessful in the pursuit of their vocation, and abandon

the scene of operations in despair: a still larger proportion of them realise no greater return for their labour than might be more easily obtained at less fatiguing, less harassing, and less debasing pursuits. As a mere matter of calculation—in so far as calculation can be applied to such a case—the steady average earnings of the great majority of the diggers constitute but a very poor return for the sacrifices incurred in the pursuit of the deceptive avocation, and are much below what they might be earning as shepherds, farm-labourers, store-keepers, or in numberless mechanical pursuits and callings. But still there are the great prizes in the lottery, which it *may* fall to any one's luck to gather; and, while this is the case, the temptation to incur all hazards for the sake of the glittering chance will always remain too strong for human nature to resist.

We have spoken of gold-digging as a debasing and delusive pursuit—and so it is, and always has been, from the beginnings of history down to the present time. Pernicious to morals, destructive of all social ties and obligations, and provocative of all the evil passions that have a dwelling-place in the breast of man. The gold-field holds out a glittering and tempting bait to needy adventurers of every grade, and is a place in which the criminal and the worthless meet on equal terms with the well-disposed and the pure. Honesty possesses there but slender claim to regard, mutual confidence has no existence, and soundness of moral character constitutes no charter of esteem. The gold-digger's thoughts are bent on gain—varied only by the dread of being forcibly dispossessed by the agency of those around him; and the pistol is ever in readiness, in

his belt by day, or beside his pillow at night, to guard his treasure. Our Australian gold fields have hitherto been, happily, in great measure free from the scenes of violence—often terminating in bloodshed—so common in Californian experience; but it is questionable how long this exemption may last, especially under the influence of the tide of immigration that has set in thither from almost all parts of the globe. Robbery, drunkenness, and excesses of various kinds, were becoming by no means unfrequent at the period of recent intelligence from the scenes of action—though the conduct of the diggers has, on the whole, been more satisfactory than might reasonably have been expected under circumstances so exciting as their present mode of life. It is satisfactory to find that provision had been made for the regular performance of religious services, and that such precautions as the limited means at their disposal admitted were made by the authorities for the protection of life and property. The Melbourne papers of late date, however, contain numerous instances of violence, with accounts of affrays of every kind, and of robberies perpetrated both by night and day. The recent piratical attack upon a vessel lying in the harbour of Port Phillip, and known to have gold on board, shows with sufficient clearness how necessary additional protective force has become to the welfare of the more honest and well-disposed amongst the colonists, and how completely the discovery of Australia's golden treasures threatens to subvert the ordinary relations of social life in the southern hemisphere.

CHAP. XXI.

Bearings of the Gold Discoveries upon the Prosperity of Australia. — Agriculture of the Australian Colonies. — The Cotton Plant. — Its Suitability to the Australian Soil and Climate.—Land Regulations. — The Labour-market of Australia.—Expenses of Voyage thither. — Steam Communication. — The Family Colonisation Society. — Chances of the Emigrant's Success. — The probable Future of Australia.

THE discovery of the Australian gold fields forms the commencement of a new era in the history of our southern colonies, and is an event calculated to exercise a powerful influence upon the condition of large classes of our population at home. For the first time, emigration to these regions has assumed a degree of importance commensurate with their vast capabilities for the absorption of labour, and has become, amongst all grades of society, a topic of public interest. In our own over-populated country, labour is a mere drug, a superfluity,—its exercise scarcely supplying (and in a vast number of cases altogether failing to supply) the first necessities of life. In Australia, labour is everything—it is the great want of the country, and its possession the best boon that can be conferred upon it. The attractions held out by the “diggings” constitute an inducement for the transference of our surplus labour to the other side of the globe, stronger than anything else could have supplied, and in the absence of which the truths of political economy might have been taught in vain, the dictates of philanthropy passed by unheeded, and lectures, essays, speeches, and pamphlets, treated alike with comparative disregard.

Lord Bacon speaks of subjects which "come home to men's business and bosoms:" the question of gold-digging is one that comes home to their *pockets*,—and hence the stream of emigration that has been recently flowing towards Australia, and continues to set in that direction at the present time. A great number—perhaps the large majority—of the recent emigrants fancy they have only to transfer themselves to the diggings, begin to rock their cradles, or pick up "nuggets" of the precious commodity, and so make a rapid fortune wherewith to live at ease for the remainder of their days. Or, at any rate, each one amongst them calculates upon the chance of his being fortunate enough to become the possessor of one of the great prizes in the gold-lottery that have unquestionably been realised, and of which others yet doubtless remain to be realised.

There can be no doubt that the greater number will be disappointed. A few individuals will continue to meet with extraordinary success—a larger number will be successful to a more moderate extent,—a still more numerous portion of the gold-seekers will realise no more than might be obtained, with less labour and infinitely fewer privations, at other pursuits,—and a very great many (probably the majority) will be altogether disappointed in the immediate object of their search. This is the uniform history of gold-mining experience, whether in relation to individuals or to companies, to proprietors of the golden soil or to diggers by government license. An axiom which embodies the results of Mexican experience in mining, affirms that a proprietor who discovers a copper-mine upon his estate will make a fortune; if he discover a silver-

mine, he will be a poor man all his days; while the discovery of a gold-mine involves his certain ruin. And the experience of California, in so far as the individual diggers are concerned, points in the direction that we have indicated.

Nor is it probable that the Australian gold-mines, however considerable their yield may remain, will constitute any exception to the rule. Even assuming the rate of produce to be equivalent to 200,000*l.* weekly, this sum, divided amongst 50,000 diggers, would be equal to no more than 4*l.* per man weekly; and there are upwards of 35,000 diggers assembled at the Mount Alexander mines alone. But the more fortunate amongst them have, unquestionably, realised much more than this—well-known cases occurring in which not less than 50*l.* a week has been realised by individuals, while some few have been fortunate enough to secure even larger prizes. The great majority *must*, therefore, have been unable to do more than obtain a return very considerably *below* the average assumed above. And the vast throng of emigrants now on their way to the diggings will of course contribute to raise still higher the cost of all the necessaries of life—many of them already at an extravagant price.*

* The above rate of produce had, indeed, been considerably exceeded at the date of the latest advices, from which it appears that in the week ending June 25th of the present year, the export from Mount Alexander brought to Melbourne 105,032 oz. of gold. In the previous week, 91,000 oz. were received, and in the week before that 80,000 oz. So that the total produce of the *three weeks* was 276,032 oz., or nearly ten tons, having a value at the English standard price of more than a million sterling! This, it must be confessed, quite transcends all previous experiences in gold-finding. But the three weeks here referred to were the immediate successors of a long previous period of drought, during which the amount realised had been below the prior average.

It is beyond a doubt, then, that gold-digging will, in the great majority of cases, prove to the Australian emigrant a delusive and an unprofitable pursuit—only to be carried on by means of severe toil and privation, and at the sacrifice of every consideration implied in the social and moral welfare of man. But its benefits, both to Australia and to England, will be unbounded; for it will have been the means of transferring the redundant labour of the one land to the labour-wanting shores of the other. It is thus, and thus alone, that the gold-mines will ultimately prove advantageous to Australia. They create capital, and they attract, as nothing else would attract, the labour necessary for its profitable employment upon the soil. They are an incident only—a splendid and providential incident, it is true—in the welfare of our southern colonies; but the material elements of Australia's prosperity are independent of them, and will only derive additional value as they may be worked to the greater advantage by their account.

It is in the capabilities of the Australian soil for an almost unbounded extension of culture, in the wide limits which yet remain for the further development of its pastoral resources, and in the increasing commerce which must result from these materials of produce,—not less than in its varied mineral wealth,—that the true welfare of the colonial population is centered; and it is to the exercise of their industrial powers in connection with these that the throng of gold-seekers must, sooner or later, direct their attention. And the masses of glittering treasure which are accumulated by the more successful of those who remain at the mines will, by the circulation of their value through the various grades of the colonial community, promote

equally the prosperity of all. "Whilst the diggers are extracting treasure from the earth, the farmer who grows wheat for them, the grazier who supplies them with beef and mutton, the grocer who sends them tea and sugar, the tailor who makes their clothes, the blacksmith who hammers their picks,—in short, all who are employed in producing, manufacturing, importing, or exchanging, the commodities with which the diggers cannot dispense, or the comforts and luxuries in which success will induce them to indulge—will reap, in the shape of large profits, the benefits which the others reap in the shape of hard-earned gold."

A large portion of Australia is, no doubt, naturally unsuited for agricultural pursuits; but, on the other hand, there are extensive tracts in which a numerous population might be advantageously employed in the culture of the soil, and which have been proved to possess capabilities of produce of the most varied description. In the oldest and most important of the Australian provinces—New South Wales—the mountain cordillera marks, with definite precision, the limit between the pastoral and the agricultural regions—between the immense plains of the interior, which must continue to be the scene of the squatter's pursuits, and the coast districts, which possess all the natural requirements for a settled and industrious agricultural population. South Australia, again, unquestionably possesses resources of a similar kind, to a vastly greater extent than have yet been developed.

Nothing can be so conducive to the permanent welfare of Australia, as the extension of agriculture in all those portions of its soil which are naturally adapted for this branch of industry. Sheep-farming, to which the wealth

of the colonies has hitherto been chiefly due, necessarily implies a widely-dispersed population, and the absence of those social advantages and refinements which can only co-exist with the presence of numbers. In the squatting districts of Australia, the dispersion is even more considerable than in other pastoral regions; for, as we have seen, the native grasses, though in the highest degree nutritious, are generally thin—to an extent which renders four or five acres requisite for the feed of a single sheep. At the extraordinarily rapid rate of increase which the Australian flocks and herds have maintained of late years, the pastoral districts of the present Australian colonies—vast as is their extent—will, at no distant period, be entirely in the occupation of the squatters. Indeed, nearly the whole available portion of Port Phillip is so already, as well as a very large proportion of the land in the older colony. Upwards of 100,000,000 acres in New South Wales are already covered with the flocks and herds of the colonists. It is, indeed, true that this is considerably less than half the entire area of the province, but then it must be remembered that there are, in the more distant interior, extensive tracts which are altogether sterile, and incapable of being used for any profitable purpose. Sooner or later, the continual advance of the squatter, further and further into the interior wilderness, must be checked by merely natural causes.

No ground of alarm on the part of those who are interested in the wool-produce of Australia is, however, to be inferred from these considerations. There can be no reason why the quantity of wool which is yearly furnished by our colonies in the southern hemisphere should not

continue to be maintained at an equal—or even a much greater—amount than at present. The annual value of the “clip” is continually increasing, as the capabilities of the native pastures are better understood by the settlers; and even were all the available land under occupation in the different provinces, there would still be no reason to expect any falling-off in the produce of an article which has become so essential an element in Australia’s prosperity, and which is so intimately linked with the interests of a large section of our manufacturing population at home. And there are yet vast tracts in New South Wales and South Australia, as well as in the hitherto-unoccupied portions of the Australian continent, which have not come within the range of the squatter. Still, it is obvious that a pursuit in which only the labour of a single man is required in tending a flock of 800 or 1000 sheep, spread over four or five times that number of acres of land, only leads to a thin and (in so far as population is concerned) an imperfect occupation of a country; and that pastoral pursuits alone—even admitting the various branches of industry dependent on, and in connection with, them—cannot enable Australia to maintain a continued absorption of the tide of labour now flowing towards its shores. The vast interior plains will continue—and must continue—to be the scene of the squatter’s operations, and will doubtless furnish their abundance of fleecy treasure, to an extent which has already rendered England in a great measure independent of her continental neighbours for the supply of wool yearly required by her manufacturers, and which promises to render her wholly so. But the better-watered districts of the coast—all those tracts, in fact, which will admit of it

—must be brought under the plough, if they are to continue (as they may, with reciprocal advantage to the colonies and the mother-country, be made to continue) a field for the profitable employment of our superabundant home-population. And we are firmly convinced that the Australian colonies possess every natural facility for the absorption, under judicious management, of our emigrant-labour for a long term of years—perhaps even of centuries yet unborn.

The kinds of cultivation that have hitherto been most successfully pursued in the Australian colonies have been referred to in our previous pages, and some notice has been taken of the extraordinary and varied capabilities of the soil. There is, however, one article of growth which has of late attracted more than ordinary attention, and which promises to constitute hereafter a main staple of colonial wealth, and that is—the cotton-plant. It has been proved, beyond question, that for a distance of at least 500 miles along the eastern coast of Australia—or from the neighbourhood of Sydney northward to the tropic of Capricorn—there are a soil and climate alike admirably adapted for the growth of cotton, together with every natural facility for its produce on an extensive scale, and its conveyance to the necessary ports of shipment. There is land in abundance—millions of acres as yet unoccupied by the settler, and open to purchase from the Crown, besides numerous tidal rivers, with the finest alluvial soil upon their banks, and every advantage of water-carriage presented by their streams for a considerable distance inland. In fact, along nearly the entire maritime portion of New South Wales, the land is of this description.

Cotton grows successfully on the banks of Hunter's River, a short distance to the northward of Sydney. Between the district which it waters, and the northern limits of the colony, there occur in succession—at intervals of about forty miles apart—the River Manning, the Hastings, the Macleay, the Clarence, the Richmond, the Brisbane, and the Wide Bay River; all of them navigable for considerable distances inland. Samples of cotton grown upon the banks of several of these streams have been brought to England, and, upon being submitted to the inspection of competent judges as to their value, have been pronounced to possess the highest possible qualities. One sample—not an article of specimen growth, but part of the produce of an entire acre, grown in the Moreton Bay district, at a distance of sixty-five miles inland—was pronounced by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to be worth 2s. per pound; and others were estimated to be worth respectively 1s. 8d., 1s. 9d., and 1s. 11d. per pound.* Of the latter, some had been grown upon the banks of Clarence River (in lat. $29\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ south), and the remainder upon the Hunter and Patterson Rivers, three degrees further to the southward. Equally good samples of cotton have been grown upon various parts of the Australian coast between the parallels of 26° and 34° south, and there

* The ordinary price of cotton in the Liverpool market varies between 4d. and 10d. or $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. The latter is the average value of the ordinary kinds of American cotton (from the United States and Brazil), and the former, that of the coarser cotton of Surat and other parts of India. The finest American cotton, that distinguished as "Sea island," which is only grown in a limited district upon the coast of Carolina, ranges between 1s. 4d. and 2s. per lb. The Egyptian cotton is generally worth about 6d. per lb.

cannot be the slightest doubt that in the maritime portions of New South Wales we possess a region capable of supplying, in almost unlimited quantity, and by the application of free British labour, this indispensable requisite of our manufactures.

In the United States the cotton-plant is an annual, being killed every winter by the intense frosts which are experienced upon the eastern coasts of the New World, and requiring to be re-produced from seed with each succeeding spring. In Australia, it becomes a perennial; the winter is there so mild as scarcely to affect the plant in any way, while the produce has been found to become more considerable, and of finer quality, the second and following years than the first. The cost of production, even upon the limited scale on which it has hitherto been grown, has been found not to exceed 5*l.* an acre, and even this would no doubt be considerably reduced by the extension of its culture. The produce on a single acre was found to be 920 lbs. in the seed, or 230 lbs. of clean cotton, such as was declared at Manchester to be worth 2*s.* per lb. This is equal to a value of 23*l.* as the produce of a single acre of land; while, as has been already remarked, it requires from three to five acres of land, in the pastoral districts of Australia, to feed a single sheep, and not less than 400 acres are employed in the produce of a bale of wool of equivalent value. Nor is the distance from the home market any greater obstacle in the case of the one than the other of these commodities: in fact, the freight of wool from Australia is ordinarily at a lower rate than that of cotton from New Orleans. There is, moreover, no branch of agricultural labour which is so simple, and

which may be so advantageously pursued upon a scale of small extent, and with the employment of only moderate means, as the growth of cotton.

There can be little doubt, therefore, that cotton is capable of becoming an article of profitable culture in this portion of the globe, and that in the future cotton-fields of our Australian colonies we may find a remunerative employment for vast numbers of our emigrant population—an employment of less precarious nature than that of gold-digging, and one that is in every way consistent with the habits of a moral, industrious, and well-ordered community. To know that thousands of those who would otherwise have remained to struggle with difficulties at home—perhaps even barely to earn the means of subsistence—are profitably engaged in producing the staple which supplies the looms of Manchester and other great emporiums of the cotton manufacture—themselves to be amongst the consumers of the cheap fabrics which are thence furnished to the markets of the world—is surely a desirable object, and one which, even on merely economical grounds, every person would wish to see realised. It is in our own colonies that we find the most advantageous market for our manufactures, and it is thither that the stream of emigration from our shores is most profitably directed. But higher considerations than those of economy are involved in the reasonable expectation that we may at no distant time be enabled to look to Australia for some portion (and probably a large one) of our supply of cotton, for at least six-sevenths of which we are at present dependent upon the United States. If the cotton produced by free labour in our southern colonies can be made (as we have every

reason to believe it can) to compete successfully with the slave-grown cotton of Georgia and Carolina, a more efficient blow would be struck at the institution of slavery in the New World by this than by any other means. Perhaps, after all, the mere extension of the commercial principle may prove the most efficient mode of accomplishing a result in behalf of which abolitionists call meetings, make speeches, and write pamphlets, in vain.*

It is not, however, upon cotton alone that the settlers in the semi-tropical regions about Moreton Bay, and in the neighbouring portions of the Australian continent, require to be dependent. The tobacco-plant grows equally well in similar localities, and both sugar and coffee are amongst the list of productions to which the climate and soil of the coast-regions of Eastern Australia are in every respect adapted. The culture of the grape is also, as we have seen, already in progress of rapid extension. In the more

* It is proposed by Dr. Lang (who was the first to call attention, a few years since, to the vast capabilities of Australia, and particularly of the Moreton Bay district, for the growth of cotton), to form a series of agricultural settlements along the various rivers available for steam navigation upon the coast of New South Wales, from Sydney to the northern limits of the colony, for the growth of cotton and other semi-tropical productions. Of the particular means by which it is designed to carry out this desirable object, we do not speak, nor is it within our province to discuss them; but we are confident that no person's opinion is entitled to greater weight upon any subject connected with the social and moral welfare of the Australian colonies than that of the reverend promoter of the scheme, who is at present in England for the purpose of carrying out his views. We believe that, without any exception, no single man can be named who has done so much to advance the welfare of Australia, in the promotion of free emigration to its shores, and in the elevation and improvement of the moral condition of its population, as Dr. Lang.

temperate latitudes, again, there is ample room for the extension of similar labours: the grain of South Australia has long commanded a high position in the home-market, and there is "ample room and verge enough" for an indefinite extension of the supply. In the province of Victoria, amongst numerous other articles of profitable growth, flax is named as one which may hereafter become of some importance: it is found growing wild in that colony, as well as in the adjacent parts of New South Wales, and appears to attain a vigorous condition.*

We have dwelt upon the varied and extensive agricultural resources of the Australian colonies, from the conviction that, sooner or later, it is to these (or to various pursuits in connection with them) that the throng of gold-seekers and other emigrants must betake themselves:—those of them, at least, who settle down into permanent residents within the southern hemisphere. Nothing can be so desirable for the real welfare of Australia, or so likely to promote the continuance (after the excitement of the present gold mania has passed away) of a healthy stream of emigration thither, as the settlement along the courses of its navigable rivers—and, in fact, in all parts of its territory which are by nature adapted for the purpose—of a class of persons possessed of means, which, though limited in amount, would yet be sufficient to enable them to cultivate *their own land*, and to acquire that feeling of independence which only a proprietary interest in the soil can impart to the colonist. What one would desire to see

* This is not the New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*), but a plant of the same species as the European flax, from which it has in all probability been derived.

grow up in Australia is a class of yeomanry, — of sturdy and independent farmers, who would not (like the squatting population) be scattered, at distant intervals, over millions of acres, constantly receding further and further from the seats of civilisation, and relinquishing every advantage of social refinement and moral advancement — but whose pursuits would be carried on within moderate reach of the towns which are the centres of colonial wealth, and who would in their own localities constitute communities in which the interests of religion, education, and morality, might be adequately consulted, and in which a future population would grow up no unworthy representatives of a Christianised and civilised country. The largely-increasing population of the colonies themselves — even independent of the rapidly-extending trade between their shores and those of other parts of the globe — gives assurance of the abundant market which would be found for the produce of a community such as we here refer to, and out of the wants of which would naturally spring various branches of manufacturing and commercial industry.

But there are many impediments in the way of the individual settler who desires to acquire a proprietary interest in the Australian soil — difficulties imposed by the course of our colonial legislation, which has protected the interest of the great capitalist at the cost of the humbler and poorer emigrant. The easy terms of tenure on which the wealthy squatters hold the occupancy of their land, with the right of pre-emption which has been granted to them, operate most prejudicially in regard to the newly-arrived emigrant of limited means, who finds vast tracts of land everywhere in the hands of these great “lords of

the soil," and, in fact, virtually monopolised by them. The right of pre-emption at the fixed minimum price of 20s. per acre operates, in nine cases out of ten, as an exclusion to the poorer emigrant from the possession of the soil at any price, the capital of the wealthy squatter being, of course, always employed in his own immediate behalf; and, excepting in those portions of the colonies to which we have previously referred, the humbler emigrant has no course left open to him, under ordinary circumstances, but that of becoming either tenant or labourer. The latter, indeed, is all that the great landowners of the Australian colonies require: it in no way conduces to their immediate self-interest to see a class of smaller proprietors and farmers growing up in their neighbourhood, and their weight in the scale of colonial legislation has uniformly been thrown into the opposite balance. Labour, labour, labour, has been their constant and everlasting cry,—as rent, rent, rent, is that of the English landowner: the object for which it is wanted being only the culture of *their own* acres, the swelling of *their own* annual return of wealth; the cry being in the case of the great proprietor of the colonial soil about equally disinterested as is the analogous demand on the part of his prototype upon the opposite side of the globe. We profess to considerable mistrust as to this perpetual outcry for labour on behalf of an influential section of the colonists;—not as to the reality of the demand, for of that there can be no doubt, nor of the fact that amongst our impoverished population at home there exist ample means for its supply—but as to the social conditions by which it is not seldom accompanied, and the motives from which it arises. There is in many cases

too much reason to feel that it is a cry which would be answered equally to the satisfaction of those who raise it, whether the labour so strenuously demanded were supplied from a pure or a corrupted source,—whether it were furnished by convicts or coolies, by Chinamen or by natives of the Polynesian islands,—whether it consisted in the free and well-remunerated service of free men, or in that now happily-abandoned species of convict-assignment which differed but little, excepting in the colour of the operative's skin, from the conditions under which labour is performed in the southern states of the American Union. But higher considerations than the interests of a class are involved in the theory of colonisation; and it is not for the sake of raising up a territorial aristocracy—and *that* an aristocracy based upon the vulgar claims of wealth alone—that the government of a great empire should give the protection of its legislative enactments to the founding of colonies in distant portions of the globe.

We believe that the high price of land in the Australian colonies operates powerfully in deterring the emigration thither of many among the middle classes of our own country who would constitute most useful and valuable additions to the colonial population, and who would, under other conditions, settle down into permanent cultivators of the Australian soil. And the course of recent legislation, instead of facilitating the acquisition of land by the emigrant, has added to its difficulties by the protection afforded to the squatting interest. But the high minimum value attached to the crown land is the great stumbling-block, and so long as it remains in force thousands will continue to transfer their labour and skill

to the valleys of the Mississippi and Missouri, where land is cheap, where the population is almost equally British, and to which (on account of their greater proximity) access is to be had at so much lower a cost. The question has been over and over again asked, and as often without any satisfactory reply, why should the unoccupied acre of Australia be worth four times as much as the similar acre of the North American soil? The former is in most cases ill-watered, often in great measure sandy or rocky, and perhaps more than half sterile—the latter is as frequently a rich alluvial soil, and is in nearly all cases abundantly irrigated, so as to be ready for the hands of the cultivator, and it is, moreover, situated at less than a third part of the distance from England. All, or nearly all, the natural advantages are in favour of the latter, and yet we add to the inequality of the comparison by restricting the purchase of the Australian soil to those who can afford to pay not less than 20s. an acre, while land may be obtained in the western continent at one quarter of that rate. Under such circumstances can we wonder at the fact, that for hundreds of our population who emigrate to Australia, thousands go to the United States; or that, since the minimum price of land in Australia was raised to its present figure, emigration thither had progressively diminished (until the discovery of the gold-fields led to the present general excitement on the subject), and that the amount of the fund raised by the land-sales had in some cases fallen off, and in others had only increased in a very small ratio compared to the increase of the population? In the United States, the moderate price of land holds out to the labourer the certainty of his being soon enabled, by habits

of thrift and industry, to become a proprietor of the soil. In Australia, he may do so likewise, but at a cost which is four-fold greater: the desire of the great landowners in that portion of the world is to have labour as much as possible at their own disposal, and the expressed object of a large portion of the legislation on their behalf has been to prevent the labourer (and the emigrant, in general, of limited means) from becoming a possessor of land.

The length, and consequent expense, of the voyage to Australia, doubtless constitutes a main obstacle in the way of emigration thither. In these respects our colonies of the southern hemisphere contrast disadvantageously with countries which are only divided from us by the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean. But even an Australian voyage, which measures half the circumference of the globe, has long since lost the terrors with which it was once regarded, and is now spoken of everywhere as a thing of general and almost familiar experience. The application of science and skill has materially shortened its length, and the aid of steam promises ere long to reduce to the measure of weeks that which formerly occupied an equivalent number of months in its accomplishment. Steam navigation to Australia is, indeed, yet only in its infancy; but this mode of transit, however great its advantages for those whose means enable them to profit by it, will probably always remain too expensive for the great majority of emigrants. The ordinary length of a sailing-voyage to Sydney varies between ninety and a hundred and twenty days—the latter being now seldom exceeded. The voyage between London and Port Adelaide has been accomplished in seventy-five days.

The present cost of the passage ranges from 18*l.* or 20*l.* to as high a sum as 60*l.*,—the former being the rate of charge for an adult steerage-passenger, and the latter the highest cost of a cabin-passenger. Good accommodation for intermediate passengers is obtained for sums varying between 25*l.* and 35*l.* But all these sums are beyond the reach of large numbers amongst those who are desirous of emigrating, and many of whom belong to the most useful class from which emigrants can be selected. There is, however, the fund at the disposal of the Government Land and Emigration Commissioners, by means of which free passages are granted, on certain conditions (including the payment of a deposit of 1*l.* per head), to agricultural labourers, shepherds, herdsmen, farm-servants, and female domestics. Certain classes of mechanics become entitled to a similar privilege on payment each of 2*l.* per head. The fund by which these passages are provided is furnished by the colonists themselves, and is the produce of the land-sales in the colonies. A sum exceeding 300,000*l.* was recently in the hands of Government for this purpose: an amount sufficient to provide for the free passage of at least twenty thousand persons.

Amongst a class of intending emigrants who are precluded by the conditions of the Government Commissioners from availing themselves of such resources, and who belong to a grade of society above that of the labouring population, the operations of the Family Colonisation Society—established and guided by an individual whose name has become indissolubly associated with the welfare of the Australian colonies, the actively benevolent Mrs. Chisholm—have proved of the highest value. Through its agency,

persons of good character have been enabled, by means of weekly instalments, to secure passages for themselves and their families at the low rate of 12*l.* or 13*l.* per head*; and loans of moderate amount, to be repaid after arrival in the colony, have been made to certain classes of intending emigrants. The latter portion of the plan has, however, been recently relinquished. One most desirable and pleasing feature in the plan of Mrs. Chisholm's operations has been the affording facilities for the collection and safe transmission to this country of small sums which the successful emigrants are desirous of remitting, as a means of providing for the passage thither of their relatives and friends. Already considerable remittances have been made in this way, and in most cases from persons in the humblest walks of life.† This, in fact, exhibits one of the

* This was previous to the recent excitement consequent on the gold discoveries, which have considerably raised the rate of passage. From 18*l.* to 20*l.* is at present the lowest sum for which the passage of an adult can be obtained.

† There have been recently placed before the public the first and second remittance-rolls from Australian emigrants, under the auspices of the Family Colonisation Society, with the age and occupation of the senders, the amount of their contributions, and the immediate objects to which it is their desire that the sums should be applied. The first list includes the number of a hundred and thirty-six contributors, whose remittances amount to a total of 2824*l.*,—the whole of it sent by persons in the humbler walks of life, shoemakers, bricklayers, plasterers, blacksmiths, bakers, domestic and farm-servants, and labourers of every description. The second list includes twenty-eight depositors, whose contributions amount to upwards of 600*l.* These considerable sums are forwarded by the senders for the express object of enabling their relatives to join them in the Australian "land of plenty," for such it has proved to them, and such it is capable of proving to thousands, and tens of thousands, of their needy countrymen and countrywomen.

practical results of the great lesson of self-dependence which it has throughout been a chief aim of the benevolent foundress of the Family Colonisation Society to inculcate on the intending emigrant, and without the thorough appreciation of which no success in emigration can reasonably be expected.

A great pecuniary advantage to those who have mercantile transactions with the Australian colonies, and a great amount of consolation and comfort to those who have friends or relatives there (and who, at the present time, has not)—will result from the quicker communication of intelligence between them and the mother-country which steam-navigation is at present in process of accomplishing. That magnificent (though, for a time, ill-fated)

Among the remarks by which the remittances are accompanied, we find such instructions on the part of the senders as the following,—“to help her mother out”—“to help mother to emigrate”—“for support of his numerous family”—“for his parents’ emigration”—“to help mother out of the workhouse”—“to assist his aged parents”—“for mother’s support or emigration,” with numerous others of similar purport.

These remittance-rolls are, indeed, most instructive and interesting documents: they bear ample and honourable testimony to the providence, as well as to the sound-heartedness, of our labouring population, where their better qualities are not destroyed or nullified by the grinding influences of a hopeless poverty, such as too many of them experience at home. Surely, such facts as are illustrated by the lists here referred to ought to operate as a strong inducement to all persons to promote the emigration of the industrious poor by every means in their power, and we hope they may not be without their influence in stimulating our guardians and overseers of Poor Law Unions to follow the excellent example of a metropolitan parish, by conveying the able-bodied occupants of our workhouses to a land where they may become honest and independent members of an industrious community, instead of remaining a burthen upon the resources of their native country.

leviathan of steam-ships, the "Great Britain," which sailed from Liverpool a few weeks since, has probably ere this reached her destination—it having been calculated that she would accomplish the outward voyage to Australia in fifty-five days, including the slight delay which would ensue from her calling at the Cape to recruit her supply of coals. Nor is there the slightest reason to doubt the practicability of the steam-voyage to Australia being performed within such a period. Allowing fourteen thousand miles as the length of the voyage to Sydney, the maintenance of a rate of speed equivalent to little more than ten miles an hour would complete the voyage within the period named: and this—or more than this—might be accomplished by the power of engines alone, even without the aid of sailing-power.

We may, therefore, reasonably expect ere long to be able to transport intelligence to our Australian correspondents, and to receive an answer to our communication (which is, after all, the great attractive charm of letter-writing, whether the subject-matter be mercantile or sentimental, sorrowful or gladdening, amatory or didactic) within a period of something like four,—or, at most, five months. This will be a great boon, in every way, and will do much towards diminishing the painful emotion which crosses the mind at the idea of the vast expanse of ocean that rolls between the shores of Britain and those of the Australian emigrant's adopted home. The speedy and cheap communication of intelligence is, after all, the most desirable and the most abiding of the links which connect man with his fellow-man throughout the globe. By all means, let us have, ere long, an ocean penny-postage, as

we now enjoy the benefits of an inland one, and strive to extend the admirable workings of Rowland Hill's beneficent and peace-preserving system to the remotest corners of the habitable globe.

As to the chances of success or failure on the part of the emigrant,—whether to the Australian colonies or elsewhere,—very much depends upon the spirit in which his task is undertaken. The first great lesson which the intending emigrant should learn, and without the knowledge of which it would be better for him altogether to relinquish the idea of emigration, is *self-reliance*. He must give up the notion of looking to others for the supply of his ordinary wants, and learn to depend—wholly and entirely—upon his own exertions. No one should emigrate to Australia who is not prepared to work—and to work hard: to undertake, that is, solid bodily labour—to put forth his muscular powers, and call his thews and sinews into action—to undergo fatigue, and to relinquish (for some time at least) all regard for the superfluities and luxuries of life. These are not to be met with in “the bush”—or, at any rate, not until the preliminary labours of the first few years of toil have legitimately prepared the way for them. *Head-workers*, as well as *hand-workers*, there are, doubtless, to be found in the colonies, and there *will* be more of them, as the population of the towns increases, and the various wants—social, moral, and intellectual—of a community growing in intelligence and refinement call for a more extended employment of their labours. But at present the great demand of the Australian colonies is manual labour, and handicraft skill outweighs the delicate efforts of intellectual culture. Shep-

herds and herdsmen, tillers of the soil, artisans of every description — carpenters, masons, sawyers, smiths, wheelwrights, tanners, bricklayers — these, and others of similar description, together with household servants, are the classes who constitute the most useful additions to the Australian population. For clerks, secretaries, and others accustomed only to the ordinary routine of office duties, as they exist in London and other large cities, there is very little demand ; — as we fear many a recent emigrant, when tired of his essay at gold-digging, will experience to his cost.

If, however, toil be for a time the characteristic feature of the emigrant's lot,—on the other hand, none who are willing to toil need suffer want. It is only the idle and the dissipated who need be poor in Australia. A good day's labour is sure of meeting with a recompense which is more than sufficient for the ordinary supply of the daily wants.

We regard with some mistrust, and with many misgivings as to their success, the numerous section (for we fear it is a numerous one) of our recent emigrants to Australia whose professed object in seeking its shores is merely the acquisition of sudden wealth, with the idea of a speedy return to their native land for the enjoyment of the golden treasures which they hope to reap. This is not the true spirit in which emigration should be undertaken : it was not in this spirit that the emigrant nations of antiquity colonised in succession the distant coasts of the blue Mediterranean, nor that the early exiles to the Western world laid the foundation, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of the flourishing communities by which all the

finest portions of the American continent are at present possessed. When a man makes up his mind to emigrate, it seems to us that he should regard the country of his choice as his adopted home,—prepare himself to settle down there, to pass the remainder of his days upon its soil, and to rear around him an offspring by whom it will be regarded as *their* native land. To go to a country merely for the sake of extracting such treasure as may be cheaply and easily obtained from it, and then to turn one's back upon it for ever, appears to be hardly giving fair usage to its merits, and seems to resemble the conduct of one who should go to the house of an acquaintance only for the purpose of getting as much of good cheer as may be possible, and then—turning up his nose at his host—should quietly wish him good-day, and take his departure. It is, no doubt, often a hard and painful task for the emigrant to sever the ties which fondly and powerfully attach him to his native land, but it is one of which the true spirit of colonisation imperatively demands the accomplishment, and unless he can brace his mind to its performance, he had better—in the vast majority of cases—not emigrate at all.

And there are compensating considerations in the emigrant's lot—above all, the feeling of independence, honest independence, achieved by the sturdy and persevering labours of his own industry—which perhaps only the successful colonist can adequately appreciate. In the words of an able writer on emigration, “to stand in the midst of one's own acres, to lean on one's own door-post to plough, to sow, to reap, one's own fields, to tend one's own cattle, to fell one's own trees, or gather one's own

fruits—after a man has led an old-world life, where there was not one thing about him he could call his own, where he was dependent on others for everything, where the tax-gatherer was his perpetual visitant, and his customer his eternal tyrant, where he could neither move hand nor foot without help that must be paid for, and where from hour to hour he could never tell whether he should sink or survive—if there be in him the soul of manhood and the spirit of self-assertion and liberty—it cannot be but that to *such a one* the destiny of an emigrant must, on the whole, be a blessing.”*

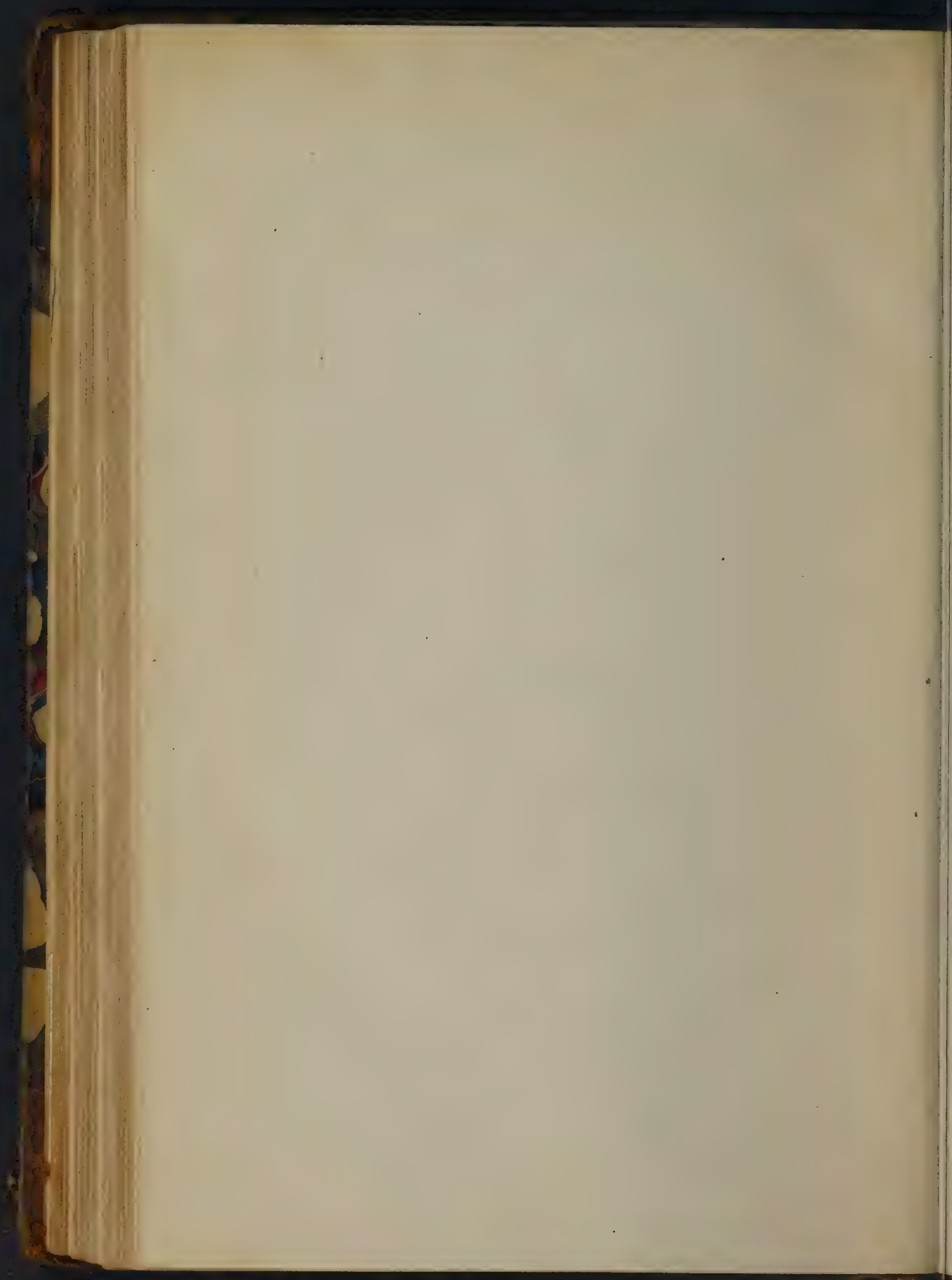
The emigrant, then, should forget the past, and look only to the future, in the assurance that with the exercise of honest and persevering industry *that future* will be a prosperous one. He will find already gathered around his Australian home the elements of a community which is thoroughly British in its tastes and habits, its feelings and its associations, and in which, as its numbers increase, all the higher attributes of social refinement are in rapid process of development. Every ship-load of emigrants that leaves our shores aids in the fulfilment of these tendencies, and adds to the moral as well as the material strength of Australia. The emigrant thither goes to no foreign soil. The country to which he transfers his energies is inhabited by a population who speak the mother-tongue of Britain, who can understand the language of Shakspeare and Milton, of Chatham and Burke, of Scott and Dickens, and amongst whom the great deeds of English history may be pointed out by parents to their children as the actions of their own progenitors, the

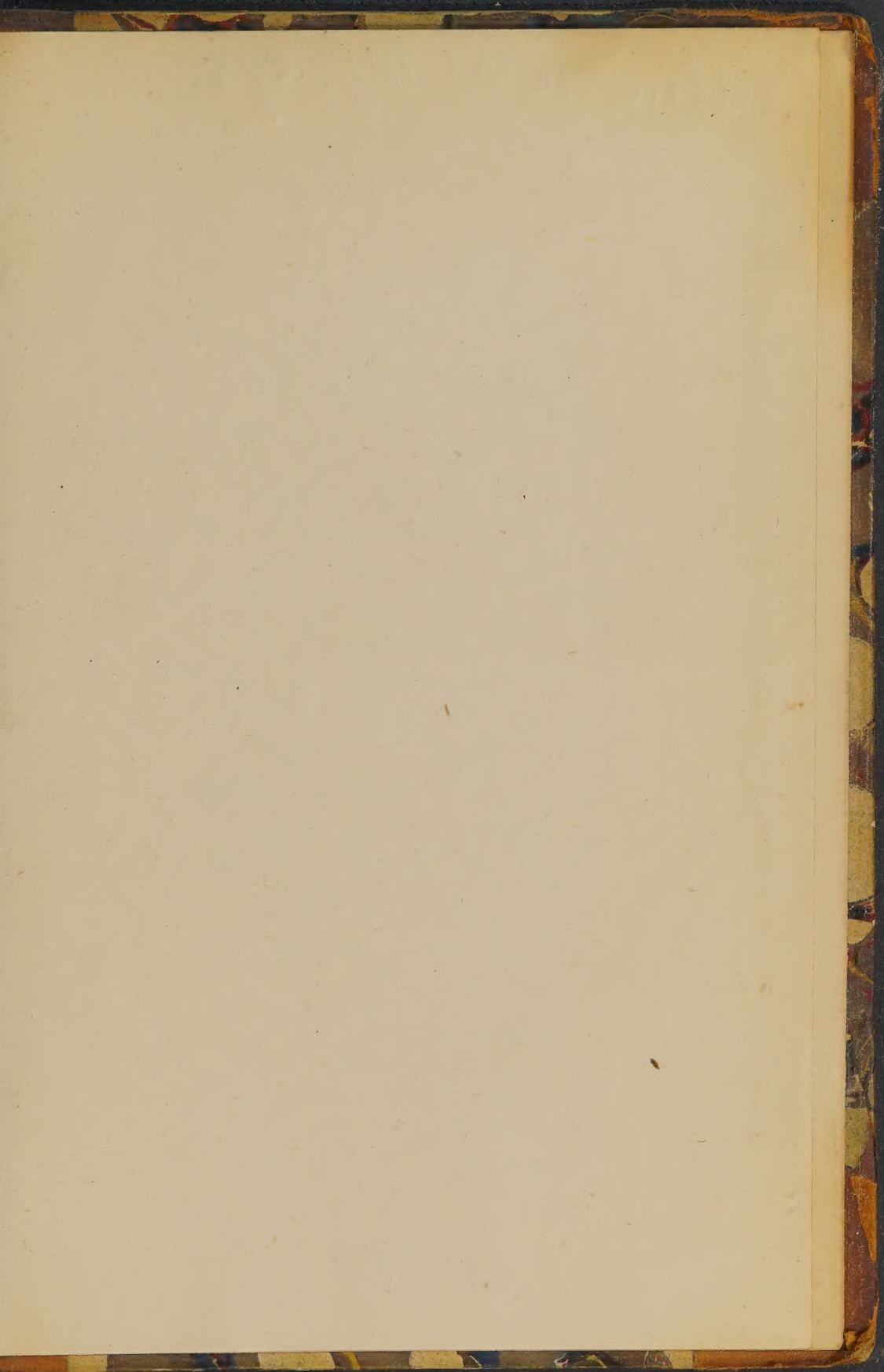
* Sydney Smith, “The Settler’s New Home.”

records of things achieved by the fathers of their own race. The future of Australia is bright and promising. Already in possession of a commerce which attracts to its shores the ships of distant nations from every division of the globe, this New World of the southern hemisphere bids fair to exercise, under the characteristic energies of the Anglo-Saxon race, an influence over the industrial destinies of Britain analogous to that which the colonisation of the western continent has exerted over the commercial relations of the different nations of Europe.

THE END.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.





Allen u sh. fdg. c/r.

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